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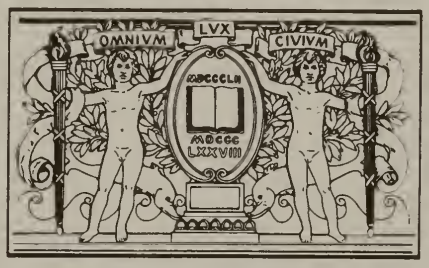

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A HISTORY OF HINGE BLOCK PLANNING

David Luberoff

Boston Redevelopment Authority

June 1988

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Summary

The 30-year history of plans for the Hinge Block is, in many ways, is a microcosm of the history of planning for downtown Boston.

Most of the plans follow the post-World War II urban renewal model which suggested that the way to revitalize a blighted area was to build a large project in the center of the underutilized area, with either direct public subsidies in the form of land acquisition and lower taxes or with indirect public subsidies through zoning relief for height and density. The current Midtown Cultural District Plan instead attempts to revitalize the area by directing strong uses from nearby neighborhoods towards the Hinge Block, which is at the center of an underutilized and blighted area.

A few other themes run through all of the plans for the block, which was given its name by the late Kevin Lynch during the drafting of the 1961 Architect's Plan for Boston. That plan proposed a spine of high-rise buildings that ran through downtown, turned at the Hinge Block, and continued up Boylston Street through the Back Bay.

Since the development of the high-spine concept, almost all plans for the area have tried to capitalize on the block's central location between downtown and the Back Bay by locating a central public gathering spot on the block. Plans from the 1960s and early 1970s and current plans for the block have also recognized the block's central position in Boston's historic entertainment district by making the block a major gathering spot for cultural uses.

On the other hand, the different plans show Bostonians' changing attitudes towards both the appropriate height for new buildings and the importance of historic preservation. Early plans for the block envisioned mid- to high-rise buildings on the scale of Tremont on the Common. Most of these plans would have destroyed the block's many historic buildings. By the early 1970s, plans called for a major high-rise building on the site. In the mid-1970s, the historic importance of buildings such as the YMCU, the Boylston Building, Jacob Wirth's, and the Hayden Building were increasingly recognized. However the plans did not retain the block's historic scale. Plans from the late 1970s and early 1980s recognize the importance of the historic buildings but also use the promise of height to attract investment on the site. Current planning not only protects these buildings, it also preserves the block's historic scale and character by limiting the height of new buildings on the block to 155 feet, the underlying zoning for the area since the 1920s. Three recent studies -- done by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, Chicago; Benjamin Thompson Associates, and an MIT urban design studio, also maintain the low-scale character of the block, although they do suggest some extra height may be acceptable on its southeastern corner. A fourth recent study, the Center City Task Force, work in progress, suggested a mid-rise tower.

A number of uses have also been suggested for the site. 1960s plans envisioned a mixed-use complex of offices, residences, cultural facilities, and a hotel. In the late 1970s the idea of a "housing court" on the site was actively discussed. The idea of locating a major hotel on the site also recurred throughout the 1970s. In the late 1970s and early 1980s office uses and a proposed Communications Center and office tower were the preferred uses. Current plans call for a mix of uses, including housing, some of which would be affordable units for Chinatown residents; offices, cultural facilities, including a new Visual Arts Center and an Asian cultural center; and commercial facilities, some of which would serve Chinatown. Other recent studies have also proposed a mix of uses, including open space.

In addition to these formal proposals, two other ideas were briefly floated for the block in the mid-to-late 1970s. Under the first plan a new federal building would have been built as an anchor for the redevelopment of the area. The building, which was also considered for the site of Lafayette Place, was ultimately built next to North Station. The second proposal would have sited an interim or second convention facility on the site which would have been built prior to a renovation of the Hynes Convention Center in the Back Bay. Other city plans also considered locating a new convention center in the Fort Point Channel area. Instead, the Hynes center was sold to the state as part of the Tregor bail-out bill and was renovated by the new Massachusetts Convention Center Authority.

In the 1970s and early 1980s a major impediment to redeveloping the block was the presence of negative impacts, such as street crime and prostitution, associated with the Combat Zone. Early plans dealt with the zone by demolishing it. The 1974 plan that led to the establishment of an official Adult Entertainment District conceded that the presence of the Combat Zone minimized the ability to use the Hinge Block as a major pedestrian connector between Downtown Crossing and Park Square. Instead the plan focussed on using streets such as Avery Street and West Street for those connections. A 1978 proposal for a housing court tried to block off the zone from other uses. In recent years the blight associated with the Combat Zone has diminished as the Combat Zone has shrunk in size and Chinatown has expanded onto lower Washington Street. Current planning foresees a continuation of this trend.

Hinge Block Plans: 1965-1988

All told, there have been about a dozen plans for the site since the mid-1960s. These plans include:

Cultural Center with mid-rise residential buildings

1965: The 1965/1975 General Plan for the City of Boston

1967: Central Business District Plan
(15 stories, 400 units of housing)

1969: Boston Study Group Foundation
(34-story residential building, 21-story hotel or residence)

1973: Feasibility Study for study group, BRA and others

High-Rise Office Building with central gathering spot

1970-1974: Park Plaza Urban Renewal Plans
(650 foot building and a 400 foot building)

Hotel

1974: Adult Entertainment District Study
(500-to-750 room hotel)

1979: BRA Theater District Study
(500 room hotel)

Housing Court

1978: BRA Lower Washington Street Study
(230-foot high, 220-unit building and a 170-unit, six-story building)

High-Rise Telecommunications Center

1982: Telecommunications Center proposal
(800,000 square foot office tower)

1983: Downtown Crossing Economic Strategy Plan
(400,000 to 600,000 square foot office tower and a residential mid-rise building)

Mid-rise Mixed Use Development

1988 Center City Task Force Work in Progress (800,000 to 1 million square feet of mixed uses, 500,000 to 800,000 sf of office space, 150-250 units of housing, 26-28 story building)

Low-rise Development with Open Space

1988 Midtown Cultural District Plan, Framework for Discussion, 155-foot height limit

1988 Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, Chicago, one 235-foot high building, 194,000 s.f. residential space; 91,150 s.f. office space; 145,775 s.f. retail space., two 155-foot high buildings and a 250-foot high building.

1988 Benjamin Thompson Associates

1988 Chinatown 2000 (MIT Urban Design Studio)

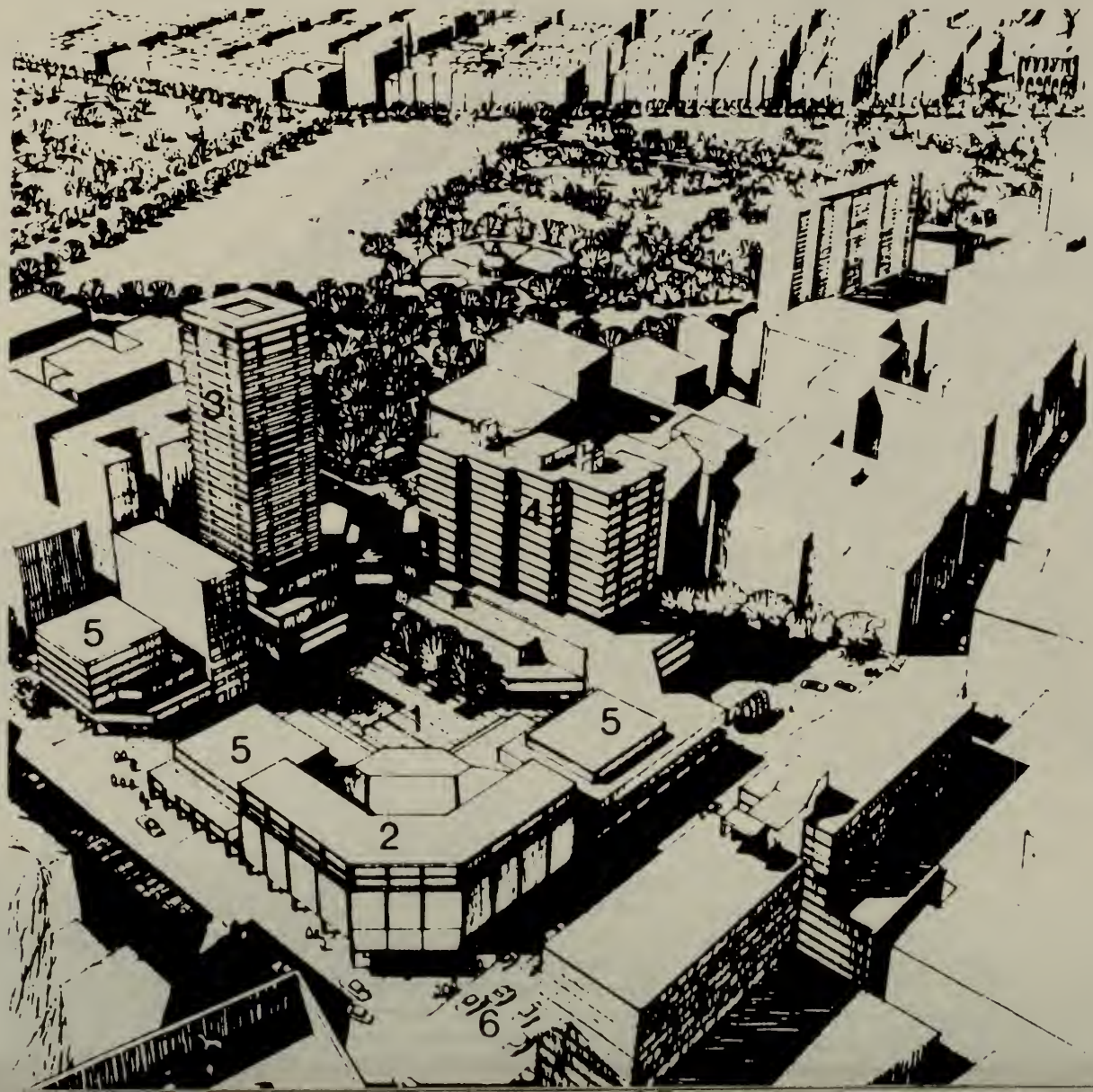
ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT AND PARK SQUARE

The lower Washington Street area today is a poor conglomeration of commercial-entertainment uses in a generally deteriorated and undesirable atmosphere. The proposal is to improve the district by creating a new architectural and activity focus for a wide range of entertainment uses.

A new public square, in the heart of the district, will be surrounded by theatres, clubs, restaurants and related commercial activities. A hotel, apartments and/or offices at upper levels, with sweeping views of the Common, will provide additional life to the area.

Many assets such as the legitimate theatres, first-run movie houses and restaurants will be retained. The one hundred million dollar New England Medical Center development in the South Cove Renewal Area south of Stuart and Kneeland Streets will provide additional ground floor commercial activity adjacent to the entertainment district.

Park Square provides the physical link between the downtown and the Back Bay commercial centers. An extension of Charles Street through Park Square will result in a better traffic pattern and allow for new development sites overlooking the Common and Public Garden. High-rise office and residential towers with ground floor commercial uses in Park Square will bring added activity to the district and help to tie together the two commercial centers of downtown Boston.



This birds-eye drawing shows the development in the center of the entertainment district, which includes
1 a central public square
2 a new theatre
3 an apartment or hotel
4 a hotel

HINGE BLOCK

a Proposed Cultural Complex for Greater Boston

[196

Boston Study Group Foundation

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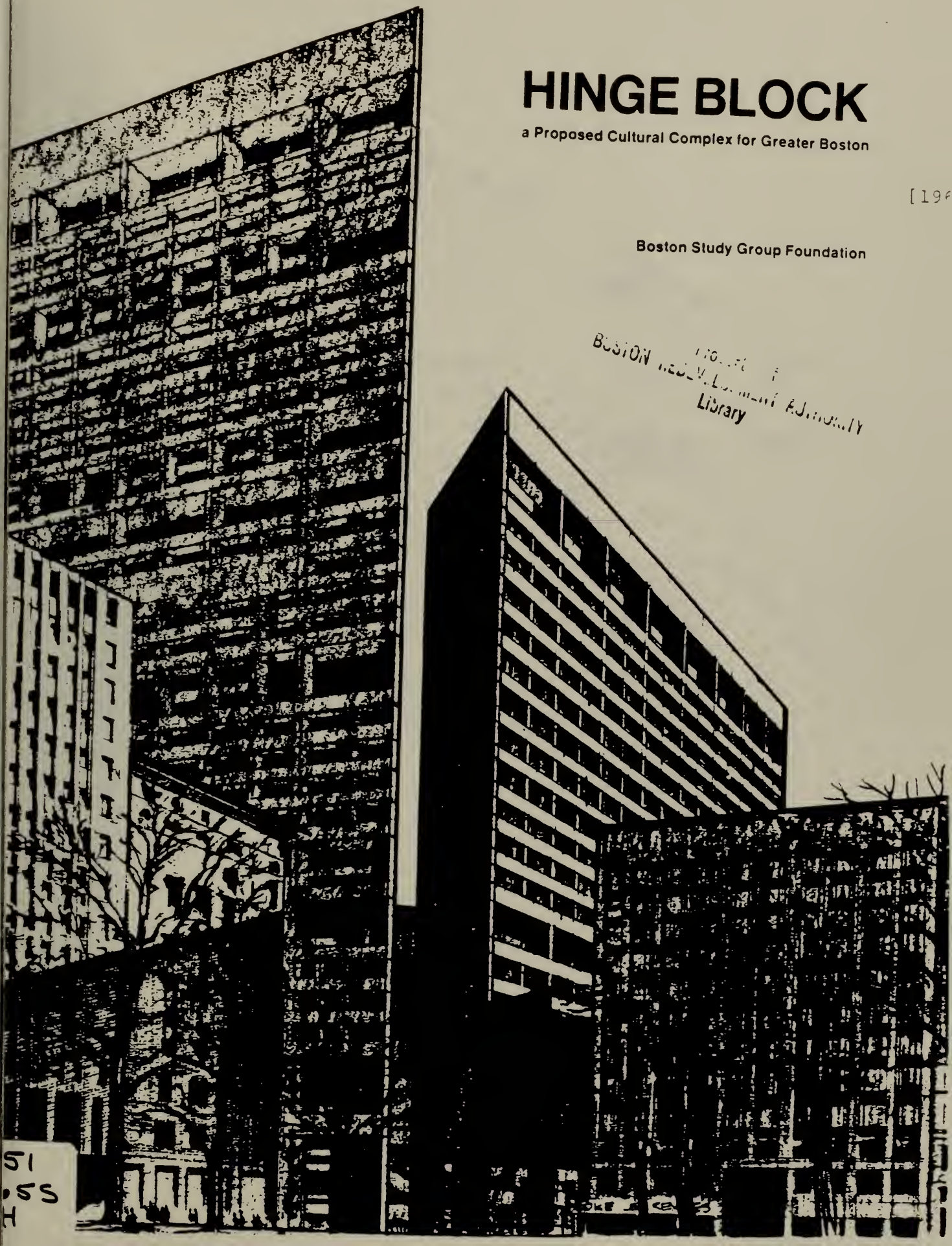

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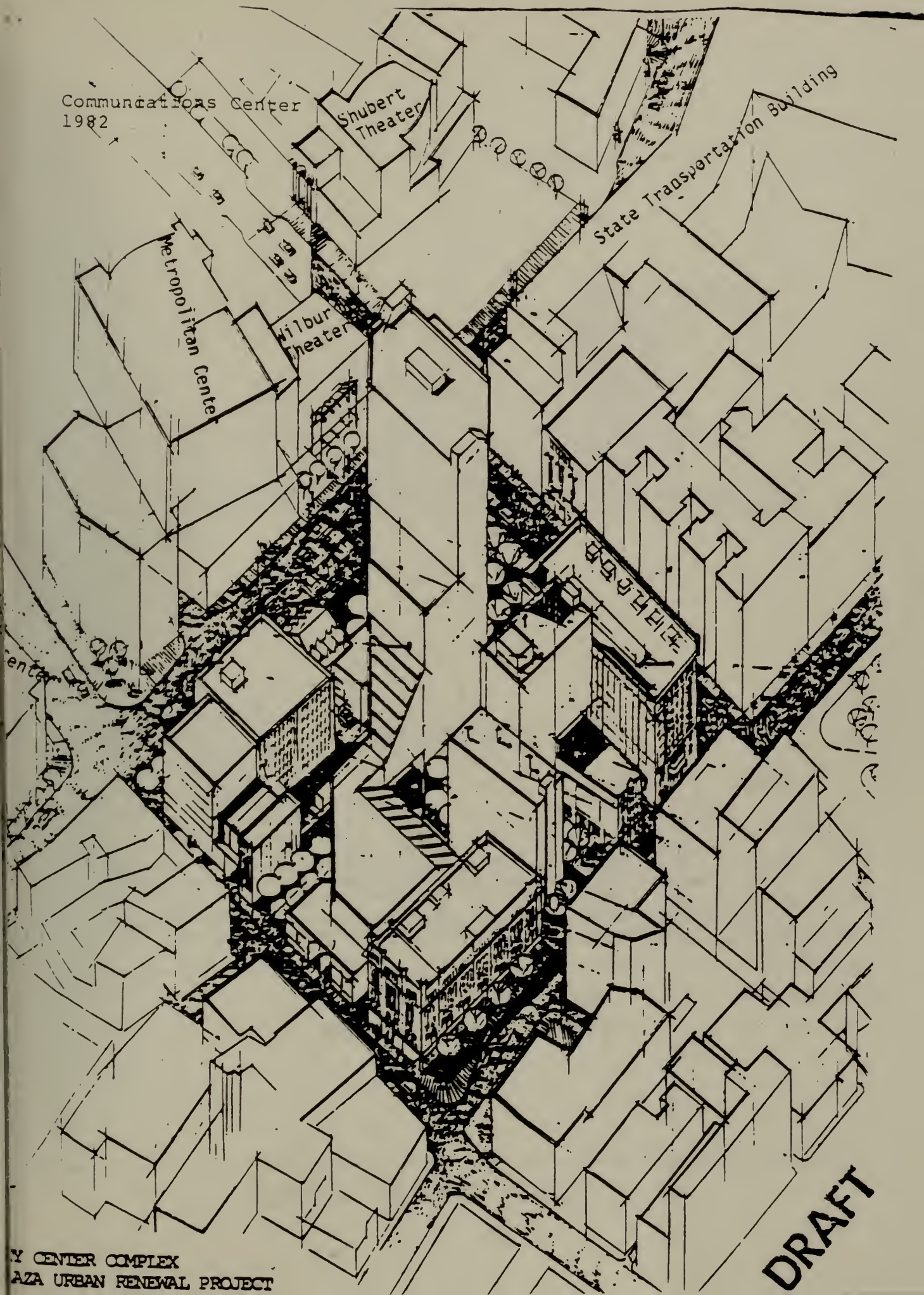
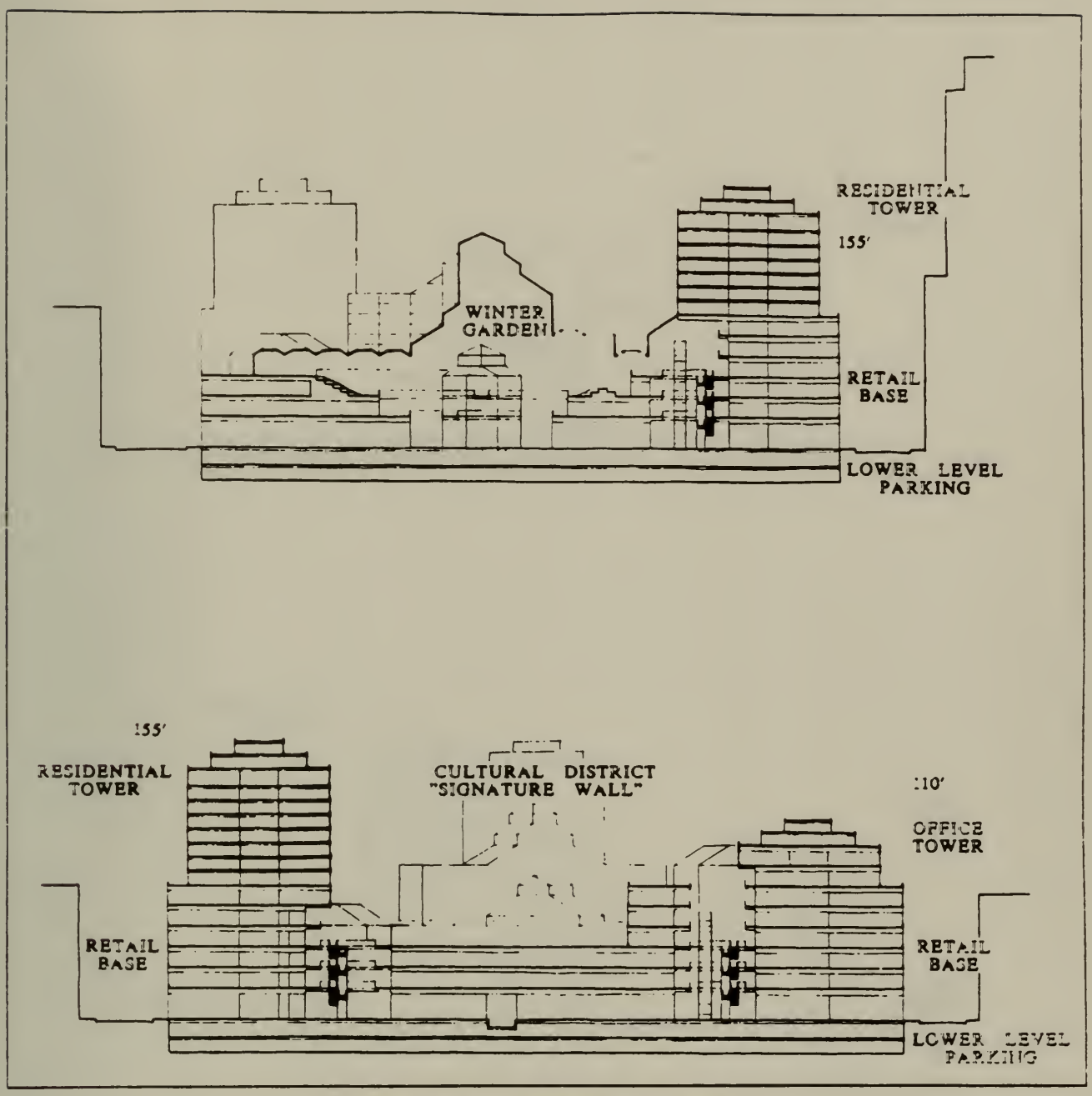
Lower Washington Street
Area
1978



Y CENTER COMPLEX
AZA URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT



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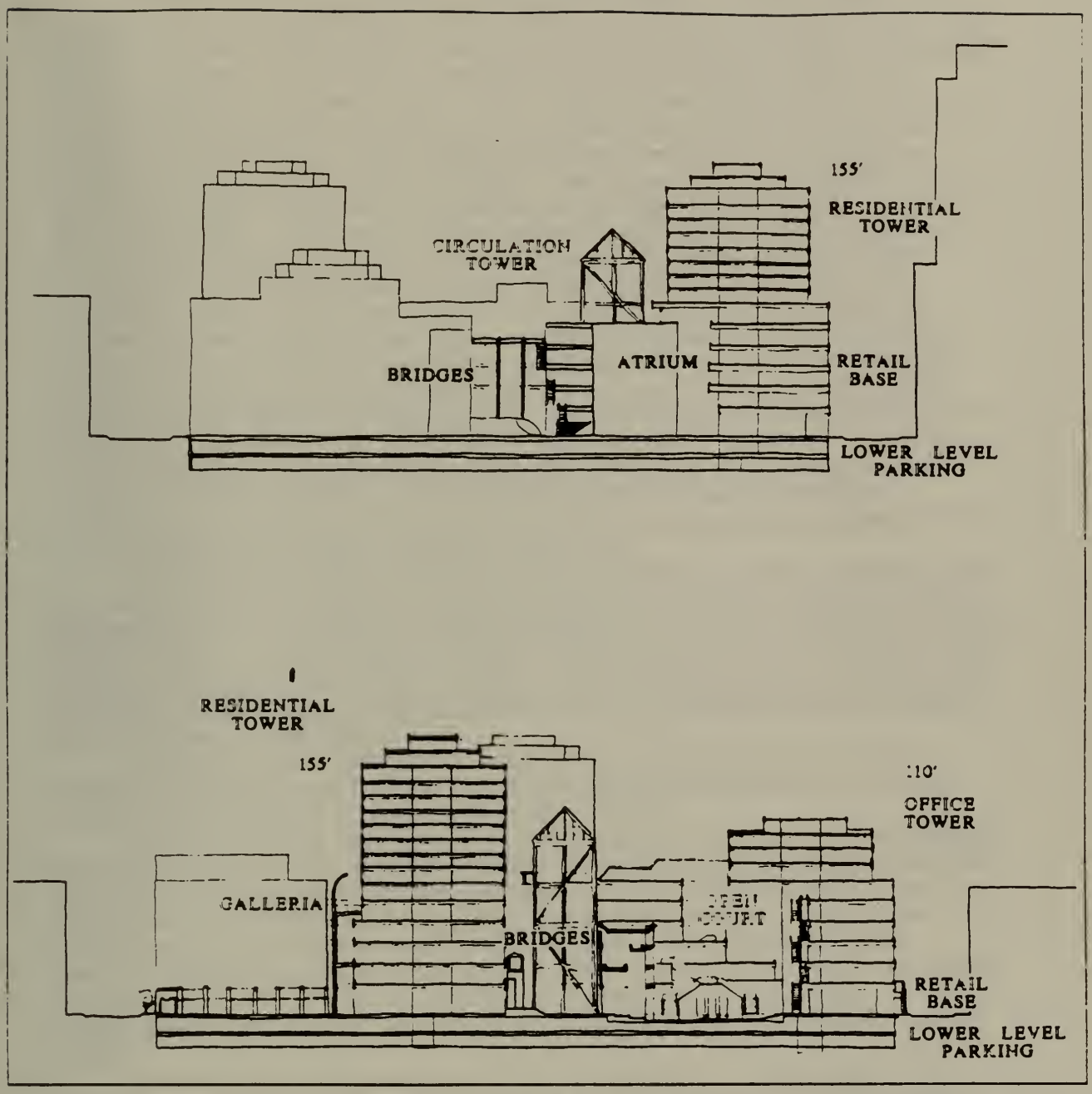
HINGE BLOCK SITE A



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SECTION LOOKING NORTH

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HINGE BLOCK SITE B

History

While the block's name as the Hinge Block dates to the early 1960s, the block has been an important part of the city since the mid 1700s. Bonner's 1722 map shows some residences in the area which grew in the mid 1700s. The Liberty Tree and Liberty Tree Tavern, on the site of the China Trade Center, were important gathering places by the 1760s. The Boylston Market, built in 1810 on this site served a growing community in the area and gave farmers from the mainland an opportunity to sell their wares without having to go into the city. LaGrange Street, which bisects the block, was named during LaFayette's famous visit to the city in 1824. Many street were named after LaFayette (eg. Fayette St. in Bay Village). La Grange was the name of LaFayette's country estate. As the city's retail sector grew in the late 1800s retail uses spread to the block. Jacob Wirth's on Stuart Street is one of the few remaining examples of mid-nineteenth century row houses which once existed on the block. Some row houses also exist on LaGrange Street. In the mid-nineteenth century the area changed into a commercial area based in part on its proximity to the railroads, which had facilities in Park Square and in South Cove. Richardson's Hayden Building, built in 1875 is an example of the commercial development of the area. The YMCU was also built in 1875. The Publix (Gayety) Theater was built as a burlesque house in 1908 during the area's growth as an entertainment center. The growth of the area as a commercial district can be seen in the Hotel Touraine, built in 1898 while its growth as a commercial area can be seen at The Union Warren Savings Bank building built in 1925.

The 1952 city business directory shows a variety of uses on the block (see Appendix A). Many Washington Street buildings were used for garment-related industries while Tremont Street buildings tended to be used for medical and media related offices. The Boylston Street edge was more connected to the city's retail district and Stuart Street had a number of uses, including garment industries and hardware stores. LaGrange Street housed a number of small service industries and a number of social clubs.

The 1950 or the 1960 general plans both identify the area as an ailing retail/entertainment area but don't really talk about its conditions or its needs. Neither plan identifies the block as the "Hinge Block."

The Hinge Block was named by Kevin Lynch as part of the development of the High Spine proposal, according to both Robert Sturgis, who chaired the BSA committee that developed the 1961 Architect's Plan for Boston, and Tunney Lee, who worked on 1960s Central Business District plans that included the site. Lynch named the block because "it was the point at which the High Spine turned," said Lee. Lynch's concept, Lee added, was that the spine of high towers would have included the block. Sturgis noted that the plan was "very diagrammatic" and "had some good words for the Entertainment District in Park Plaza."

Interestingly, Lynch used the "hinge" description in a 1955 study for the New England Medical Center on the possibility of a medical center expansion in South Cove, an area just south of the Hinge Block bounded on the north by Stuart/Kneeland Streets, on the west by Tremont Street/Shawmut Avenue, on the east by Albany Street and on the south by the railroad tracks. "The area lies, as it were, at the rather weak 'hinge' of an extended central district," Lynch wrote. " ... From the standpoint of the city, strong commercial development at this hinge position is vital, if it is to pull its central district together and reestablishment it

as a unit." It appears to have been only a short step to identify the Hinge Block as the key part of Lynch's hinge area.

By the mid 1960s the area that included the Hinge Block had become known as the Combat Zone and included what Victor Gruen in the 1967 plan for the Central Business District called a number of "honky-tonk" bars (see Appendix B). Nude dancing was occurring in some of these establishments in the late 1960s. These uses proliferated in the 1970s with Washington Street housing a number of adult bars, bookstores, peep shows, and movie theaters while LaGrange Street was home to some bars, many prostitutes, and one gay "health club" that was reportedly used for sexual encounters. Tremont Street also housed a few adult-oriented bars and one adult movie cinema. Interestingly, the Publix/Gayety Theater on the block never had much of a career as an adult movie house unlike the historic Pilgrim Theater across the street which has been used for X-rated films since the early 1970s. Most of these establishments have closed.

In recent years the Combat Zone has shrunk in size. From its peak of about 40-adult oriented businesses in the late 1970s, the district dwindled to about 25 uses in the early 1980s to only 11 uses today. This decline has been due to a number of factors including changing social mores, the greater availability of adult-oriented movies and literature in local establishments, federal investigations, the growth of Chinatown, and city-wide enforcement of licensing policies that require the identification of the establishments' true owners and hold the owners of establishments accountable for illegal activities occurring on their premises.

Of the 11 remaining adult-oriented facilities in and near the Combat Zone, four are on the Hinge Block. They include the Glass Slipper bar on LaGrange Street, the Art Cinema and Caribe Lounge on Tremont Street, and the Peeparama arcade on Washington Street, which has turned in its peep show license but still sells adult books, magazines, videos, and sexual paraphernalia. The decline in the Zone has coincided with a rise in Asian-oriented businesses operating in the area. Currently two Asian-oriented stores are located in the Publix/Gaiety Building and the now-closed Publix/Gaiety Theater is used to store Asian groceries. The China Trade Center also houses some Asian-oriented businesses.

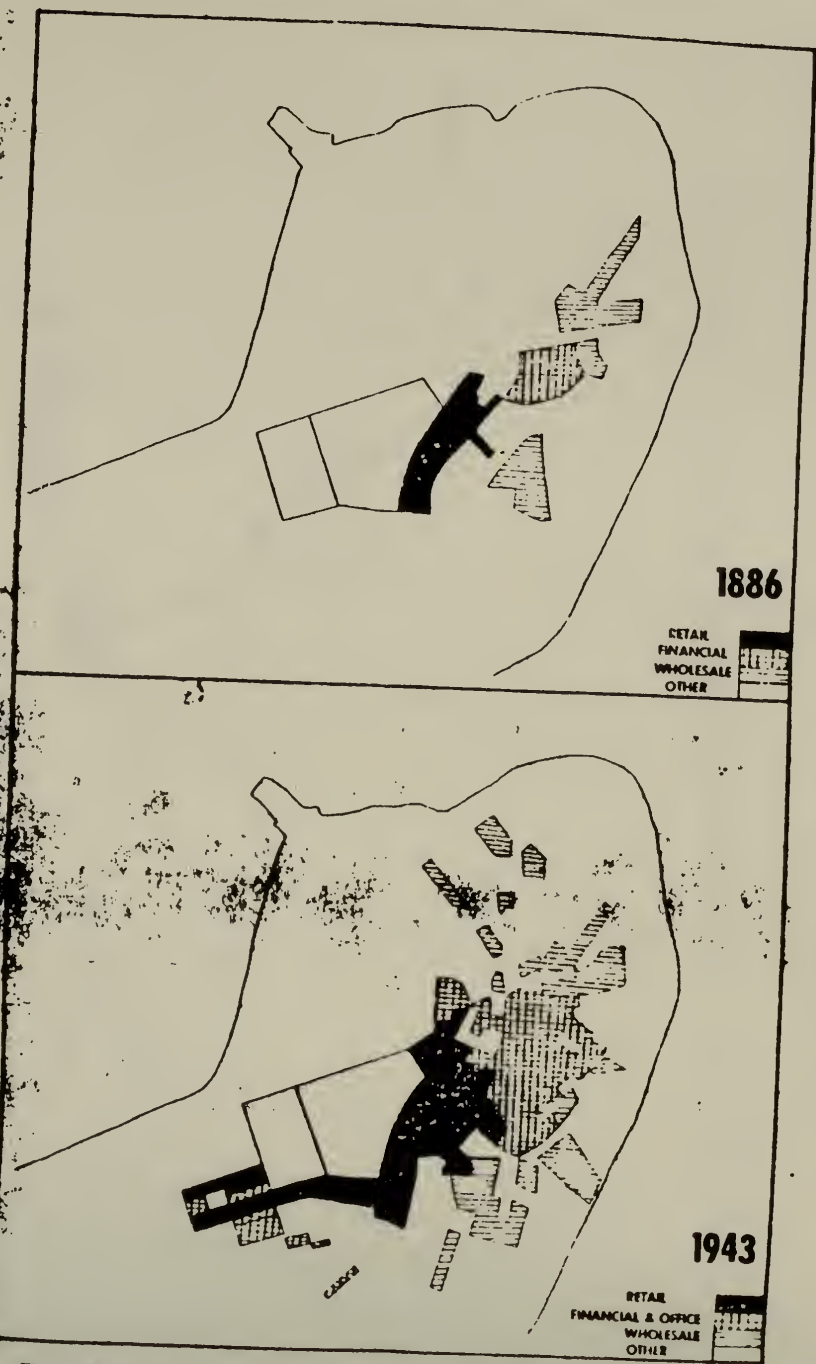
The Cultural District Area in 1814 -Among the renamed streets, Newbury became Washington Street.

Away from the maximally accessible rectangle the proportion which clothing and related stores bears to the total number of stores gradually diminishes. To the south, on both Washington and Tremont streets, are additional theaters, cinemas, and other entertainment facilities. Beyond these are furniture stores and heavy household equipment stores. To the east, toward South Station, are hardware and appliance shops. To the north is the cheap entertainment district of Scollay square, and beyond it another hardware and furniture area. Northeast of the Washington-Summer-Winter intersection is the banking and investment house district. Beyond it lie, on one side, the wholesale and storage businesses and, on the other side, the meat and produce markets. Other distinct and identifiable areas of homogeneous commercial functions are to be found in the textile and leather goods district around Essex street, the antique shops area on Charles street, the bookshops area around Ashburton place and on the northern extremity of Beacon street, etc. Figure 15b portrays fairly well the territorial differentiation and distribution of the main commercial functions in central Boston.

A comparison of the commercial land use maps for 1886 and 1943[16] (figures 15a and 15b) reveals a surprising fixity of the various specialized areas. Thus the districts devoted to finance and to wholesaling have remained essentially unchanged for 49 years. Likewise the heart of the retail district is today just where it was in 1886. However, one important locational shift is apparent in retail business which calls for some comment. As may be seen from figure 15b, there has been a very pronounced westerly drift of retail stores out Boylston street and the in-town segment of Newbury street. The stores involved in this outward movement are mostly specialty shops which feature high grade clothing, novelties, antiques, and the like. Their appeal is almost wholly to the higher income level of shoppers. As a result of this drift there has developed a new and distinctly smart shopping district at the southeastern extremity of the Back Bay. There

[16] Map for 1886 constructed from data in George E. Ellis, *Bacon's Dictionary of Boston* (Boston: 1886), pp. 405–406; 1943 map adapted and modified from map 2A in *Report on a Survey of Business and Industrial Buildings, City of Boston, 1935*, E. R. A. Project No. X2235, F2, U46 (Boston, City Planning Board, 1935).

Land Use in Boston
1947



FIGURES 15a AND 15b. DOMINANT COMMERCIAL LAND USES

Lent by Robert S. Sturgis

OM: Past Futures: Two Centuries of Imagining Boston by Alex Krieger and Lisa Green

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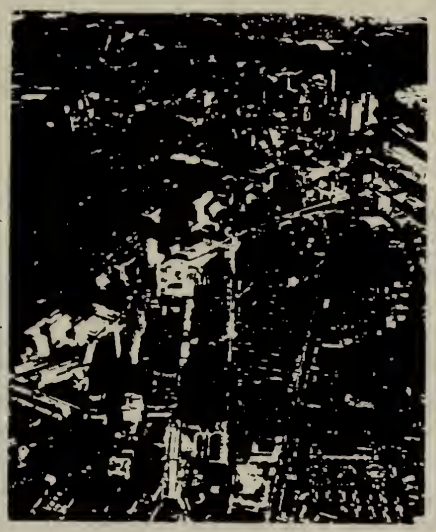


Lent by the Boston Redevelopment Authority

3 *Architect's Plan for Boston*, Committee on Civic Design, BSA, 1961

While enthusiastic about tall buildings and highways, the current "black sheep" of urban development, the basic humanism of the committee was evident. They spoke about renewal but also about preservation. They made simple, direct suggestions, but were fired with vision. Theirs was among the first efforts to incorporate the monolith of the modern city – the tall building – into a city planning framework. The importance of this nearly forgotten initiative is only now being felt, as the "Tall Spine" becomes a primary physical characteristic of the city.

Members were: Robert S. Sturgis, Chairman; Herbert L. Bogen; Daniel J. Coolidge; Carmen DiStefano; Ronald R. Gourley; Herbert Hamilton, Jr.; John K. Myer; John W. Priestly, Jr.; Francis B. Sellers; David D. Wallace; and Kevin Lynch, Consultant.

4 Concept Sketch for the *Architect's Plan for Boston*
Kevin Lynch, 1961

This is perhaps the earliest graphic conceptualization of the "Tall Spine," an idea for channelling the expansion of the downtown into a dense band around the Southerly perimeter of the Back Bay. It was sketched, merely a thought doodle, during one of BSA's Civic Design Committee meetings in preparation for their *Architect's Plan*.

5 An aerial view in the direction of the future "Tall Spine," 1959

6 An aerial view of the "Tall Spine" after 25 years of building, 1984.

An unanticipated consequence of building the "Tall Spine" is the manner in which it reestablishes in a new way the shape of the original peninsula.

Lent by the Boston Redevelopment Authority

7 Plan for the "Capital Web"
Boston Redevelopment Authority, 1965

In 1965 the BRA, a five year old agency whose name clearly expressed its mandate, published an exhaustive report on the city's redevelopment agenda. It was the most comprehensive set of planning objectives in Boston's history. Copies of the Summary Report, an impressive document, are still available from the BRA at the pre-redevelopment price of three dollars. It is a bargain! Current planners should read it. They would appreciate that the plan has not, as opinion has it, been completed. Among the general concepts proposed in the *1965-1975 General Plan* was the notion of continuous "seams" of public and commercial facilities, along with open spaces, that would connect the neighborhoods of the city. The ubiquitous "spokes of the hub," the arteries radiating outward from the land mass of the original peninsula, were to take on an expanded meaning as the principal development corridors of a newly prospering city.

1965/1975 Master Plan
BRA
1965

The first mention of the Hinge Block in city documents is in the 1965/1975 Master Plan. The plan notes that the "The presently weak 'hinge block' between the Downtown retail and Park Square areas is potentially an important focal point for culture." The plan recommends a complex with "a combination of restaurants, a hotel, and other commercial services with new theaters adjacent to the Tremont Street entertainment complex and two Central subway/transit stations. Linking the center to related activities in the Common, including possibly the Boston Art Festivals, is a plaza for pedestrians and an outdoor theater."

The plan retains none of the block's historic buildings and includes a new mid-rise building on Boylston Street running from the Boylston/Tremont intersection almost to Essex Street. No heights or square footages are given.

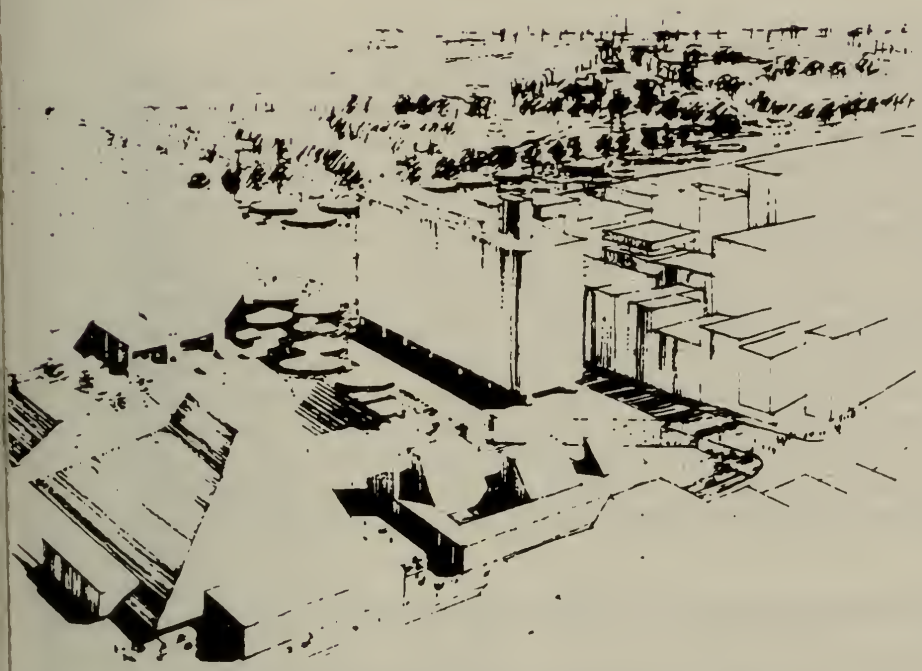


Figure XI-12. The presently weak "hinge block" between the Downtown retail and Park Square areas is potentially an important focal point for culture. Depicted here, in a view from lower Washington Street toward the Common, are a combination of restaurants, a hotel, and other commercial services with new theatres, adjacent to the Tremont Street entertainment complex and two Central subway / transit stations. Linking the center to related activities in the Common, including possibly the Boston Arts Festivals, is a plaza for pedestrians and an outdoor theatre.

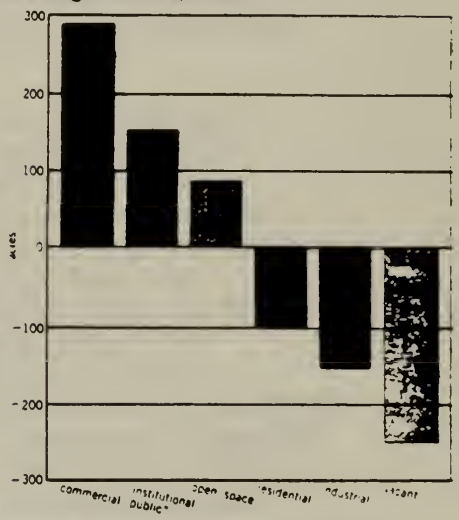
17
POSED LAND USE ACREAGES CHANGES IN THE REGIONAL CORE, 1960 / 1975 (1)

OF USE	1960	PERCENT DISTRIB.	1975	PERCENT DISTRIB.	1960 / 1975 PERCENT NET CHANGE
ential	1,070	38.9	970	35.3	−9.3
nercial	400	14.5	690	25.1	72.5
trial (2)	310	11.4	160	5.8	−48.4
utional (3)	400	14.5	550	20.0	37.5
Space	300	10.9	380	13.8	26.7
nt	270	9.8	—	—	−100.0
s & Highways (4)	(4)	—	(4)	—	—
L	2,750	100.0	2,750 (5)	100.0	

stimates apply to the definition of the Regional Core given on page 121, which includes the South End, arker Hill Fenway, Back Bay, Downtown, and Downtown North GNRP's.
ncludes railroads and U. S. Naval installations.
ncludes public schools and playgrounds.
treet and highway acreage is included in the preceding gross acreage estimates. The City Planning Board stimated that in 1960 there were 960 acres of streets and highways in the Regional Core and 4,840 acres utside the Core, a City-wide total of 5,800 acres.
oes not include acreage that may be created by offshore filling.

: Boston Redevelopment Authority staff estimates.

Proposed Land Use Acreage Changes in the Regional Core, 1960-1975



SOURCE. Boston Redevelopment Authority staff estimates.

Central Business District Urban Renewal Plan
BRA and the Committee for the Central Business District
1963-1967

The first major planning effort for the Hinge Block was as part of the planning for the Central Business District Urban Renewal Area. This project was going to be the next major urban renewal plan after Government Center. Planning for the area, which was done primarily by Victor Gruen for both the BRA and a private group called the Committee for the Central Business District. Gruen's work went from 1963 until 1967 and probably was the source of the information in the 1965 Master Plan. The overall plan was never implemented because of federal cuts in the urban renewal program. However, portions of the plan, including a proposal for a pedestrian mall in the city's retail district and the Woolworth's retail/parking complex were implemented as part of the plan. A series of documents put out during the CBD planning process discussed the Hinge Block proposal. The high-rise residential tower for the block suggested in these documents was to one of a series of high-rise towers residential buildings ringing the Common and Public Garden from Tremont on the Common to Park Square. According to Tunney Lee, Gruen's early plans also called for a major department store on the site which would be the second anchor for the Downtown Crossing area.

Documents in the BRA library from the Gruen era include:

BRA October 14, 1965 resolution determining that the Central Business District Project Area is a "decadent, blighted, deteriorated, and deteriorating area."

The resolution includes a section on the Hinge Block area which says, in part, "A subarea which contains a mixture of entertainment and service retail activities may be called the "Hinge Area" because it is a pivotal district where the north-south axis running from North Station through the Government Center, the retail core, and the entertainment district intersects the east-west corridor running through Park Square, Back Bay, and Prudential Center to Kenmore Square ... Predominantly obsolete structures characterize the subarea. High quality legitimate theaters mingle with marginal show bars, historic top rated restaurants abut pizza parlors, numerous parking lots engulf the odd shaped parcels of demolished buildings, and deteriorated structures are masked with facades, glaring neon signs and dilapidated billboards. No new construction has occurred in the subarea for thirty years, yet there has been continuing demolition to provide parking spaces and to eliminate dangerously dilapidated buildings. Of the 86 buildings remaining in the subarea, in federal law classifications, 35 are deficient and 38 are structurally substandard to a degree requiring clearance."

The motion further says that four buildings at the corner of Boylston and Washington Street cause a serious bottleneck in traffic and notes that "the absence of a continuous route from Boylston Street into Essex Street is a major blighting factor."

Central Business District
Urban Renewal Plan Proposals
February 10, 1966, Preliminary Staff Proposal

"The area bounded by Washington, Boylston, Stuart and Tremont Streets [the Hinge Block] is a district of cheap hotels, low-grade bars, and decaying buildings. The Plan's proposals for this section are based on two major objectives: First, to upgrade the district and eliminate its worst activities; and second to provide an environment that will foster high-quality entertainment, cultural, and recreational facilities. Development possibilities for provided in this block are for theaters, restaurants, night clubs, and other related entertainment activities."

"This block is considered to be an important 'hinge' connecting the retail core to the Park Square and beyond to Copley Square. A strong link here is considered vital if the CBD and the Back Bay sections of the city are to develop to their fullest potential as interrelated parts of the central city."

This document makes no mention of historic buildings to be preserved and recommends a 15-story building with 160,000-to-220,000 square feet of commercial space, 500 units of housing or hotel rooms and a 300-car parking garage.

The Hinge Block, An opportunity for the Arts in Boston
fall 1966 pamphlet

This pamphlet was put out during the planning of the Central Business District Urban Renewal Plan. The pamphlet identifies the three major elements of a Hinge Block renewal plan as "a new theater, high-rise apartments (and/or a hotel), and over 250,000 square feet of commercial space for a wide variety of entertainment and related functions."

In the plan, "the buildings are arranged around an open court with public easements connecting the perimeter to a central open space." Covered arcades provide protection from the weather and high rise building masses on the edges would have allowed for inter-connected terraces."

The plan called for about 400 units of housing in buildings on Tremont Street and Boylston Street but also suggested the Boylston Street building could be used for a hotel. The Tremont Street building were going to be a "high-rise" building which would have become the "landmark" structure for the Hinge Block "rising above the surrounding area."

Boston Central Business District Planning Report
prepared for the BRA and the Committee for the Central Business District by Victor Gruen Associates, Inc., 1967

This document was the official CBD report. It calls on the city to "completely change the character of the Entertainment District by introducing new theaters, concert halls, possibly an opera house, a variety of restaurants, bars, nightclubs, specialty retailing, and a new hotel. Projected

development of the Hinge Block/Entertainment area (upper Washington Street from Avery to Kneeland Streets) called for:

- General Commercial	200,000 square feet
- Offices	50,000 square feet
- Residences	500 units

The report described the character of the area as follows: "This large area is the major entertainment center for the region. Three major legitimate theaters: the Colonial, Shubert, and the Wilbur are located here as well a smaller "off-Broadway" type theater. Numerous movie theaters are also in this area. The Music Hall, Gary, Saxon, RKO Keith's, Paramount, and the Astor are the major ones. Night clubs, lounges, honky-tonk bars, and restaurants are also numerous. ... Various surface parking lots are used by shoppers and workers during the day and by the entertainment patrons at night. Structures in the area are primarily non-fire-proof pre-1890 lot buildings and pre-1870 small scale residential buildings. The majority of the buildings are either deteriorating or dilapidated. At present, the activity linkage between this and the adjacent functions is poor. ... The adjacent Chinese Commercial District is only one block to the east of this area, yet there is no clear activity relationship."

The plan outlined 7 major objectives for the area:

1. Elimination of deteriorated and dilapidated buildings and the marginal honky-tonk activities.

2. Creation of a strong center of multi-use activity at a point where the high density linear spine, as described in the 1965/75 General Plan, turns north from the east and Back Bay into the CBD -- thus the name "Hinge Block."

3. Improve activity linkages in all directions -north to the retail core, south to the New England Medical Center, east to Chinatown, and west to Park Square and Back Bay beyond.

4. Retain primary entertainment functions and provide ample off-street parking.

5. Capitalize on proximity to the Common, and the Tremont and Washington Street subway lines.

6. Encourage, if possible, the lifting of Blue Laws.

7. Coordinate development activities with circulation improvements such as the connection of Boylston to Essex, with improvements to subway stations, platforms, and if possible, the creation of a new concourse connection between Tremont and Washington Streets.

The planning and design proposal for the area featured "a central public open space in the center of the [Hinge Block]. The space is framed by

various activities and building types. A large civic music hall or theater dominates the space and is flanked by tiers of commercial uses such as restaurants, bars, night clubs, retail shops etc. Sidewalk arcades along the street frontages and the interior provide continuity as well as protection from the weather. The resulting double-faced buildings would provide an increase in active street frontage and create a development of special physical character. Higher building masses are at the edge of the block, allowing for inter-connected terraces sloping toward the center portion. This aspect of the design will help to intensify the activity related to the inner courtyard - with restaurants, shops and building entrances occurring at several levels. The lower buildings which complete the development are flexible as to specific use. A library, art galleries, night clubs, restaurants, and specialty shops, an in-town museum, and small movie theaters are among the compatible enterprises desired to complete the spectrum of activities for the "Hinge Block." The plaza area, linking pedestrian to the Common at Tremont and Boylston, could be used as part of outdoor exhibits such as the Arts Festival."

Rehabilitation guidelines for the site noted that the presences of a strong social, residential, and commercial community in Chinatown. "All efforts should be made to strengthen [activities in Chinatown] by relating the new Hinge Block development along Beach Street to the high activity on Tyler and Hudson Streets as well as Beach Street itself." The report further noted that "since the operation of most enterprises [in Chinatown] is marginal ... it is unlikely that private new construction [or rehabilitation] will occur. ... Guidelines for rehabilitation must then be oriented to the sensitive economic balance of the district, attempting to bring the area up to minimum code standards and through careful coordination with the Chinese community, attempt to provide strategic public improvements."

The report adds that: "in contrast to the rehabilitation potentials of the Chinese commercial area, two large sound structures -- the Colonial and the Little buildings offer a good opportunity for office and/or residential rehabilitation. The transformation of honky-tonk functions on lower Washington Street to a new and active cultural and entertainment center, along with new residential facilities, will provide the required environmental improvements for an economically sound rehabilitation program. These two buildings are suggested for a rehabilitation program, since they are unusually large and have rectilinear plans adequately provided with light and air, with good views of the Common and the Hinge Block public open space.

None of the Hinge Block's historic buildings are mentioned as candidates for preservation in the plan which has a small map listing 16 historic buildings in the CBD, one of which is the Jacob Worth's building. However, drawings for the site do not appear to retain the Jacob Worth's building. The historic buildings sited in the plan are: The Park Street Church, Amory Ticknor House, Boston Athenaeum, Old Granary Burying Ground, King's Chapel, King's Chapel Burial Ground, [Old] City Hall, Corner Book Store, Old South Meeting House, Old State House, Locke-Ober, St. Paul's Cathedral, Masonic Building, Jacob Wirth's, and the Tavern Club.

From the Press Statement by Edward Logue on the release of the CBD Plan on May 18, 1967:

"The fifth outstanding element of the project plan is along lower Washington and Tremont Streets in the area unhappily known today as Boston's 'Combat Zone.' Here we propose major surgery - acquisition and demolition - in order to create new sites for development for commercial, residential, and cultural activities."

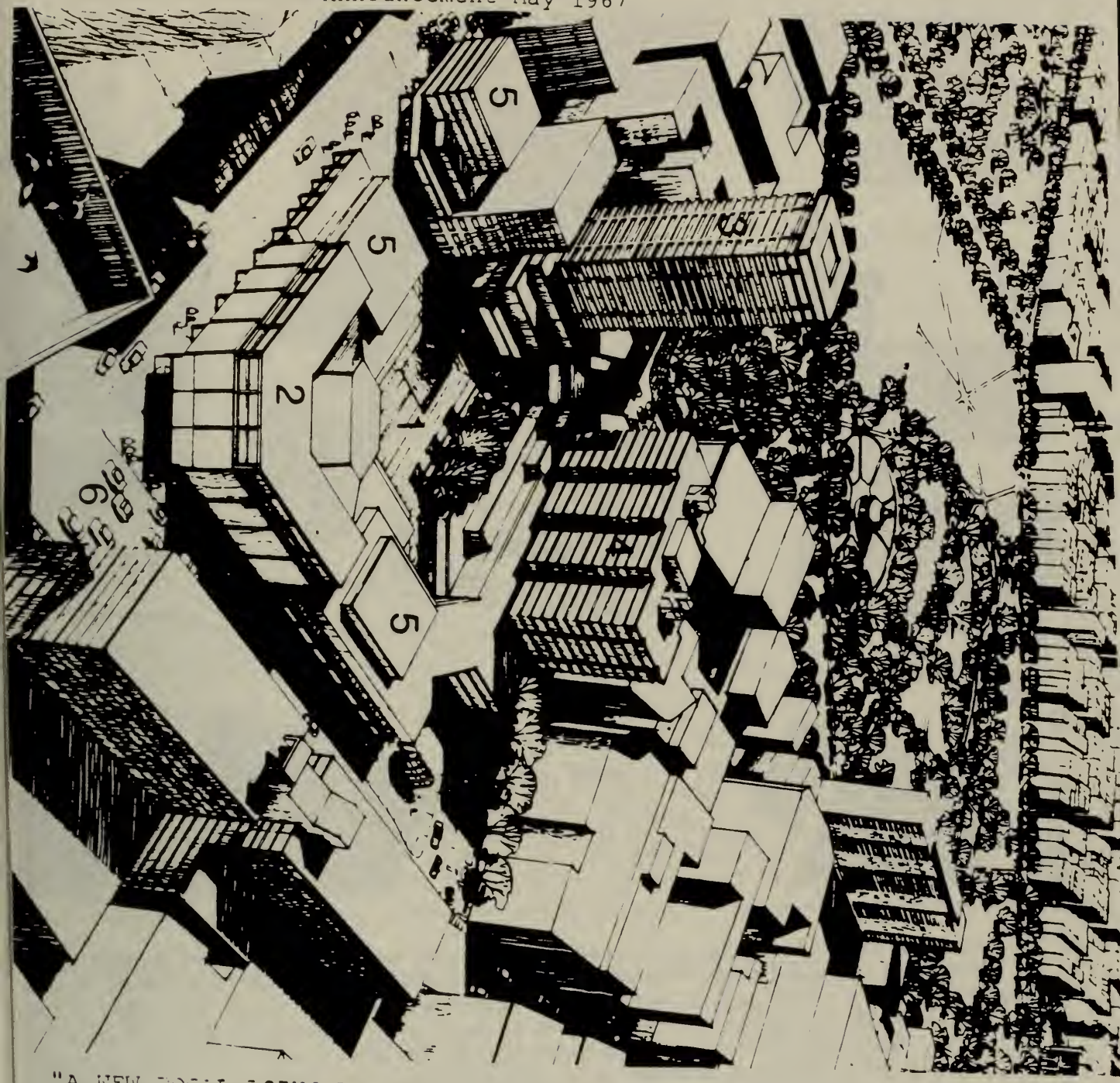
The press kit for the event included a photograph of a rendering of the proposed block with the caption: "A new focal point for the Entertainment District" is part of the urban renewal plan for Boston's business district. This bird's eye view drawing shows a development in the center of the entertainment district, which includes:

1. A central public square, surrounded by -
2. A new theater
3. An apartment tower
4. A hotel
5. Commercial entertainment development

Boston/ The Plan for the Central Business District
1967 summary document on the Central Business District Plan

Also calls for a new "public square" on the block with a "hotel, apartments, and or offices at the upper levels with sweeping views of the Common." No heights are given and no historic buildings are retained.

Press Kit for CBD Announcement May 1967



"A NEW FOCAL POINT FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT IS PART OF THE URBAN RENEWAL PLAN FOR BOSTON'S BUSINESS DISTRICT. THIS BIRDS'-EYE DRAWING SHOWS A DEVELOPMENT IN THE CENTER OF THE ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT, WHICH INCLUDES:

1. A CENTRAL PUBLIC SQUARE, SURROUNDED BY -
2. A NEW THEATRE
3. AN APARTMENT TOWER
4. A HOTEL

The "Hinge Block" is seen as an important renewal proposal which can provide a major opportunity for the performing arts and related entertainment activities, and, at the same time, eliminate a blighting influence in the CBD. Such a development can be deemed feasible only if there is enthusiastic support leading to sound developer interest, with a well-developed program for financial backing. If such a program can be created, the "Hinge Block" could become a reality with great significance for the future of culture and recreation in the New Boston.

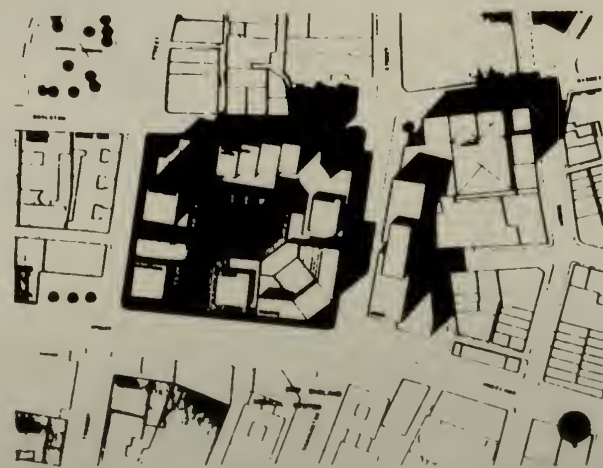
The Hinge Block
An Opportunity for the Arts in Boston
1966

Gruen
1967

Key Plan

LOWER WASHINGTON STREET & HINGE BLOCK

The sketch illustrates a new public square in the heart of the district, which will be surrounded by theatres, clubs, restaurants and related commercial activities. A new hotel, apartments and offices at upper levels, with sweeping views of the Common, will provide additional life to the area.



Plan of the Hinge Block.

View of the corner at Tremont St. and Boylston St. looking east

Boston: Central Business District Planning Report [Gruen[1967

A. Park Street Church
B. Amory Ticknor House
C. Boston Athenaeum
D. Providence Steps
E. Old Granary Burial Ground
F. King's Chapel
G. Burial Ground
H. City Hall
J. Corner Book Store
K. Old South Meeting House
L. Old State House
M. Locke-Ober
N. St. Paul's Cathedral
O. Masonic Building
P. Jacob Wirth
Q. Tavern Club

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

0 400 Feet

N

Park Plaza Urban Renewal Plan
1970-1974
BRA

The Hinge Block was part of the Park Plaza Urban Renewal Plan. This plan was an attempt to pick up some of the pieces of the Central Business District Plan after federal urban renewal funds dried up. Under the first plan for Park Plaza, the Hinge Block and another parcel on the other side of lower Washington Street were to be redeveloped as Phase II of the plan after construction had started on the prime Phase I parcels in Park Square. In fact, the plan started a clock running for the Phase II parcels of the Park Plaza Urban Renewal Project. Under the plan once construction started on Parcel A-1, the Arlington/Hadassah parcel, the BRA had three years to select a developer for the Phase II parcels. If the BRA failed to select a developer within three years the Phase II parcels were no longer included in the plan.

These provisions led to much criticism that developers were being allowed to do the easiest part of the project first. This method was justified on the grounds that because the project was primarily financed privately, the more lucrative portions would have to happen first. Since Phase I never really got off the ground, no formal proposal was ever made for Phase II. However, BRA documents give a framework for what would have been allowed for the site. Before being finally sent back to the drawing board by the state in 1974, the BRA put out hundreds of pages on the Park Plaza plan including:

A 1970 pamphlet on Park Plaza which said that "a major tower on the "hinge block" ... could be the tallest in the city." The plan did concede the tower should be set back from the Boylston/Tremont Street edge of the site.

A 1970 historic building survey of the Park Plaza area that recommends saving the Hayden Building even if the building had to be moved; the Boylston Building; and the YMCU. The plan also recommends saving the Liberty Tree Plaque on the Liberty Tree Building and giving it to an organization such as the Bostonian Society for interior display. Under Park Plaza plans the Liberty Tree block would have been destroyed.

The official July 1971 Urban Renewal Plan for Park Plaza which said that no major structures above 125 feet would be allowed at the corner of Boylston and Tremont Streets and set a 650 foot height limit for the rest of the site. The FAR was 15 with a bonus of up to 17 if certain desired cultural facilities were provided in the development. Permitted uses were commercial, residential, office, hotel, entertainment, open space, and cultural uses. Pedestrian easements were required through the parcel from Tremont Street to Washington Street and from the northeast (Tremont/Boylston) and northwest (Boylston/Washington) corners of the site. Pedestrian connections were required to the Boylston and Essex (now Chinatown) subway stops. On the other side of lower Washington Street, on Parcel 5, a 450-foot building was allowed with an FAR of 15.

The 1971 developers kit for Park Plaza further noted that no parking was required on the Hinge Block site and that "two towers, one having a maximum height of 650 feet and the other having a maximum height of 400 feet may be located on the northeast and southwest corners of the site. No

building above 155 feet may be developed on the corner of Tremont and Boylston Street." FAR for the site was 14 with a possible bonus to 17 for the inclusion of cultural facilities. The kit cut down the lower Washington Street tower on Parcel 5 (the Liberty Tree Block) to 400 feet at the corner of Washington and Stuart Streets.

The kit added that "There shall be a major public space which will cover 30 percent of the site which may be located in the center of the site or in the southeast corner of the site. If the open space is at the center, this may become a covered galleria." An arcade was desired along Boylston Street and an arcade and trees were requested along Stuart Street.

Vehicles would have entered the site from Washington and Stuart Streets. At the mezzanine level there would have been pedestrian connections at Tremont and Washington Street with a possible mid-block bridge over Stuart Street. There was also supposed to be a major east-west pedestrian passage at the mid block of Tremont and Washington Street, circulation to the interior of the parcel from the corner of Tremont and Boylston, and Washington and Essex Streets. At the basement level there was an underground connection between the Boylston and Essex subway stations with access to the site. There was also an underground service road parallel to Stuart Street.

In a September 1972 letter to the BRA, Mortimer Zuckerman, the president of Boston Urban Associates, the designated developer for Phase I of Park Plaza promised that Urban would submit a redevelopment plan for Parcel D (the Hinge Block) within three years of the approval of the urban renewal plan. But Zuckerman apparently did not have as ambitious plans for the site as other might have.

"At this point," Zuckerman wrote, "we anticipate the following uses in Parcel D: Another hotel; middle-income residential - primarily efficiencies and one-bedroom units; retail and entertainment facilities; and moderate-income housing for the elderly. ... Please note that the with Parcel C [in Park Square] involving considerable residential development, the development of Parcel D will have to be coordinated with Parcel C so that all the residential units of C & D are not on the market at the same time.

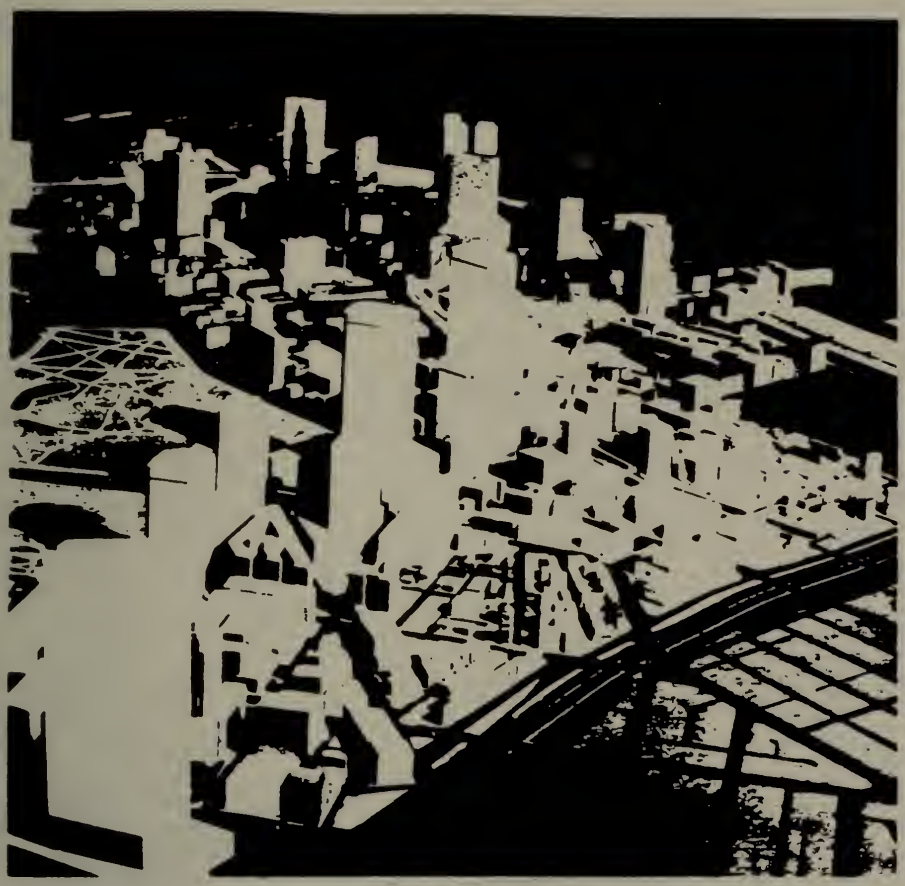
"In addition, Boston Urban Associates will offer its professional services to any non-profit sponsor representing the Chinese community or other citizen's groups selected by the BRA as the redeveloper of Parcel E within the Park Plaza renewal area, should such services be desired."

A mid-1973 letter of intent signed by both Urban and the BRA noted that "Urban has further agreed separately to submit a proposal for the development of Parcel 4 and to offer its professional services to a non-profit developer or citizen's group as the developer of Parcel 5.

A supplemental agreement to the letter of intent notes that the BRA and Urban "agree to accelerate their development schedule [for Phase II] as follows ... the Authority will advertise for developers of Parcels D and E within 6 months after final and unconditional approval of the Urban Renewal

Plan. Urban agreed to submit, within four months of the BRA's advertisement a Hinge Block proposal that would have included 200 units of low and moderate income housing, subject to available financing from MHFA and HUD. Urban also agreed to develop a technical assistance program to encourage "participation of the Chinese community in the development of Parcel E." If Urban failed to submit such a plan it had to pay the BRA $1.5 million and could have forfeited its right to develop one of the Park Square sites it was designated to develop. The BRA agreed to designate a developer of the Hinge Block within one year of final and unconditional approval by the state of the urban renewal plan for Park Plaza.

New towers in Park Plaza will provide the development link between downtown and the Back Bay as illustrated by this BRA study model



1970 pamphlet Park Plaza

Land Use

Apartment, hotel, commercial, office, open space and parking are the primary uses desired. Office and apartment space will be housed in high-rise structures and possibly mixed within the same buildings. Commercial activity, located in the lower floors, should be focused on night-time entertainment, cultural activities, specialized retail trade (such as the music industry in the area), and small retail stores to serve the area's offices, hotels and apartments.

The area's existing and highly desirable entertainment activities should either be retained in their current locations or relocated in or near the project area.

Scale and Massing

The development should fill in the missing link in the line of high-rise buildings stretching from Government Center to the Prudential Center, and should relate to the proposed towers at South Station. The Stuart Street side of the project, away from the Common and Public Garden, can in general accept tall buildings. A major tower in the "hinge block" (bounded by Boylston, Stuart, Washington and Tremont streets), which could be the tallest in the city, should be set back from the Boylston-Tremont corner. Lower structures should occur in the Washington-Harrison block and along the Common and Garden frontage.

A major design objective is to relate proposed tall structures to existing and proposed lower structures so as to avoid dense clusters

PROJECT AREA AND DEVELOPMENT PARCELS
SCALE: 1" = 400'
C
B
2b
3
4
5
A
2a

Cultural Complex on the Hinge Block
Boston Study Group Foundation
1969-1973

1969 preliminary report

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Cultural Complex
Feasibility Analysis
Hinge Block
Park Plaza Urban Renewal Area
done by Larry Smith and Co., in June 1973 for:

Boston Study Group Foundation
MA Council on the Arts and Humanities
Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs
City of Boston
Boston Redevelopment Authority

In February 1968 - before the Park Plaza plan was announced - a group of Boston businessmen, professionals, and a university administrator, all member of the Boston Study Group and many of them board members of theater, opera and arts organizations began meeting to examine the "perilous financial situation" of several major arts organizations. The group, whose members included Mortimer Zuckerman, reached the conclusion that financial problems of the cultural groups are to a large extent caused by inadequate facilities.

Because the construction of new facilities was too expensive for the arts organizations, the groups recommended "the construction of a new kind of arts complex based on government assistance and the close integration of large scale real estate development." In mid 1969 the group put out a preliminary design for the complex, which would have been located on the Hinge Block.

The proposal called for "a single complex of substantial magnitude and density, in which the proportion of highly profitable land uses (hotel, apartments, offices, large shops) far exceeds the proportion of marginally profitable uses (theaters, galleries, and other arts facilities). This allows facilities for the arts that are difficult to finance by themselves to be built as secondary, but integral parts of a much larger and more financially viable real estate development."

The proposed complex was a single structure with shared lobby spaces, managed by "a single non-profit organization." The preliminary design called for a 2000-seat theater, a 1000-seat theater, and a 300-seat theater. Art galleries would have been included in the lobby space which would have been shared by the three theaters. Restaurants, cocktail lounges, and other small retail functions would also have fronted on the lobby and onto the streets. The lobby would have been a covered, skylit space, about 250 feet by 150 feet at ground level. Theater lobbies would have been on platforms above the main lobby. Pedestrian pathways would have reflected the Hinge Block function. Two subway entrances would have been built on the site.

The project would also have included a two-below grade and twelve above-grade levels. An outdoor gallery on the ninth floor would have been an outdoor exhibition garden. On the west (Tremont Street) side, an about 20-story hotel would be built while on the east (Boylston Street) side an about 34-story apartment building would have taken up almost the entire block. An about 10-story theater/gallery/communication center would have been built along Stuart Street. No historic buildings would have been saved.

In June 1973, Larry Smith, a San Francisco-based consultant issued a study for the BRA, the study group, and others on the whether it would be economically feasible to develop a cultural center on the Hinge Block using the zoning envelope outlined in the BRA's Park Plaza plan.

According to Smith the Boston Study Group Foundation had carried its studies forward to the point where a preliminary design had been developed for a 2.2 million square foot complex which would have included 300 apartment units, 480 hotel rooms, 200,000 square feet of office space, 180,000 square feet of office space, 40,000 square feet of exhibition and museum space, four restaurants, two nightclubs, hotel dining area, lounges, function rooms, two 300-seat theaters, one 2,000 seat theater for opera and ballet, one 1,000 seat theater, one 300-seat theater, a rehearsal shop and office space for arts organizations, a communication center for film, TV, and radio, and 1,600 parking spaces. The preliminary design study envisioned a large department store on the lower two levels of the site.

June 1972 drawings for the site done by Cambridge Seven Associates and included in Smith's report show a pedestrian bridge to the Park Plaza development, new offices for the ICA, a ninth-floor roof garden on a building at the center of the site, a 35-story apartment building on Boylston Street, and a 21-story hotel on Tremont Street.

Smith noted that since the development of the group's original plan "there have been changes in the basic thinking with regard to the Hinge Block development. Of significance is the decision to reduce the parking to be provided on the Block in favor of parking off-site on Parcel 5 adjacent to the site to which a grade-separated bridge connection can be provided. In effect the Hinge Block has been enlarged to include an additional parcel."

Smith's study noted that given the timetables in the Park Plaza plan, the Hinge Block would not come on line until between 1980 and 1985. According to his analysis, the BRA's FAR and height guidelines for the site would have allowed, with the bonus for cultural facilities, 4.92 million square feet of space to be built on the Hinge Block and Parcel 5, across the street on lower Washington Street.

Smith's report reached a number of conclusions about the feasibility of a mixed-use development on the site. First he found that by 1980 the Hinge Block would be a good site for luxury housing, in part because luxury housing in other

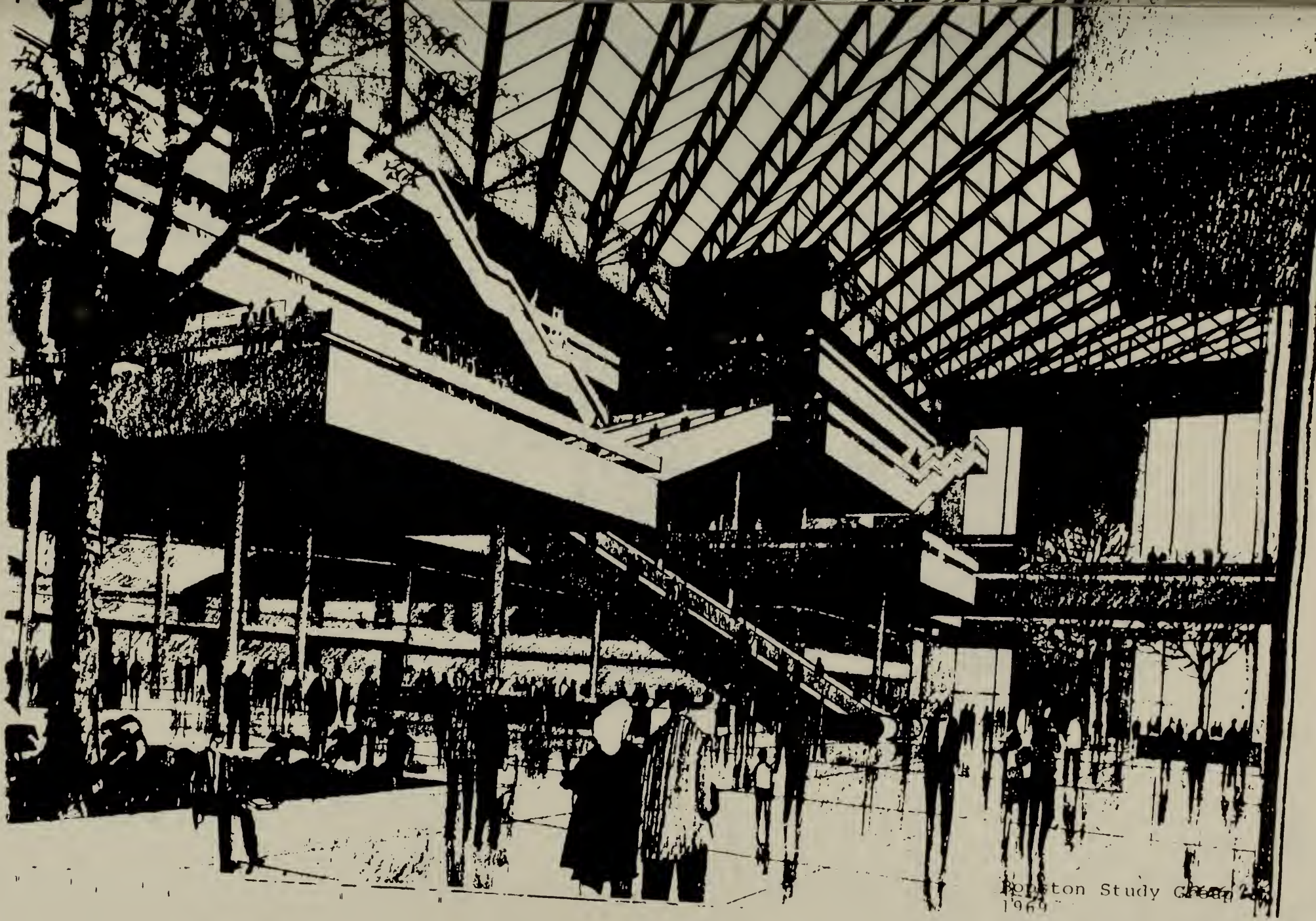
parts of downtown, such as Charles River Park, would be "reaching obsolescence."

Second, he concluded that a large department store was not appropriate for the site because the site would not need a large traffic generator and could instead rely on traffic between the downtown area and Park Plaza. Not having a department store was good for the developer of the Hinge Block, he added, because department stores produce relatively low rents as compared with rent paid by other tenants. In addition, he noted, a department store would require large amounts of space which might make it difficult to locate a cultural facility on the site. Smith did find that because of the strong location of the block, between Park Plaza and the central business core, it would be a good site for retailing.

In terms of hotel rooms, Smith found that a hotel on the site would be entering an already defined hotel market (the Statler, Howard Johnson, and a 1,000-unit Park Plaza Hotel) and that the demand for the hotel rooms would be present in the city.

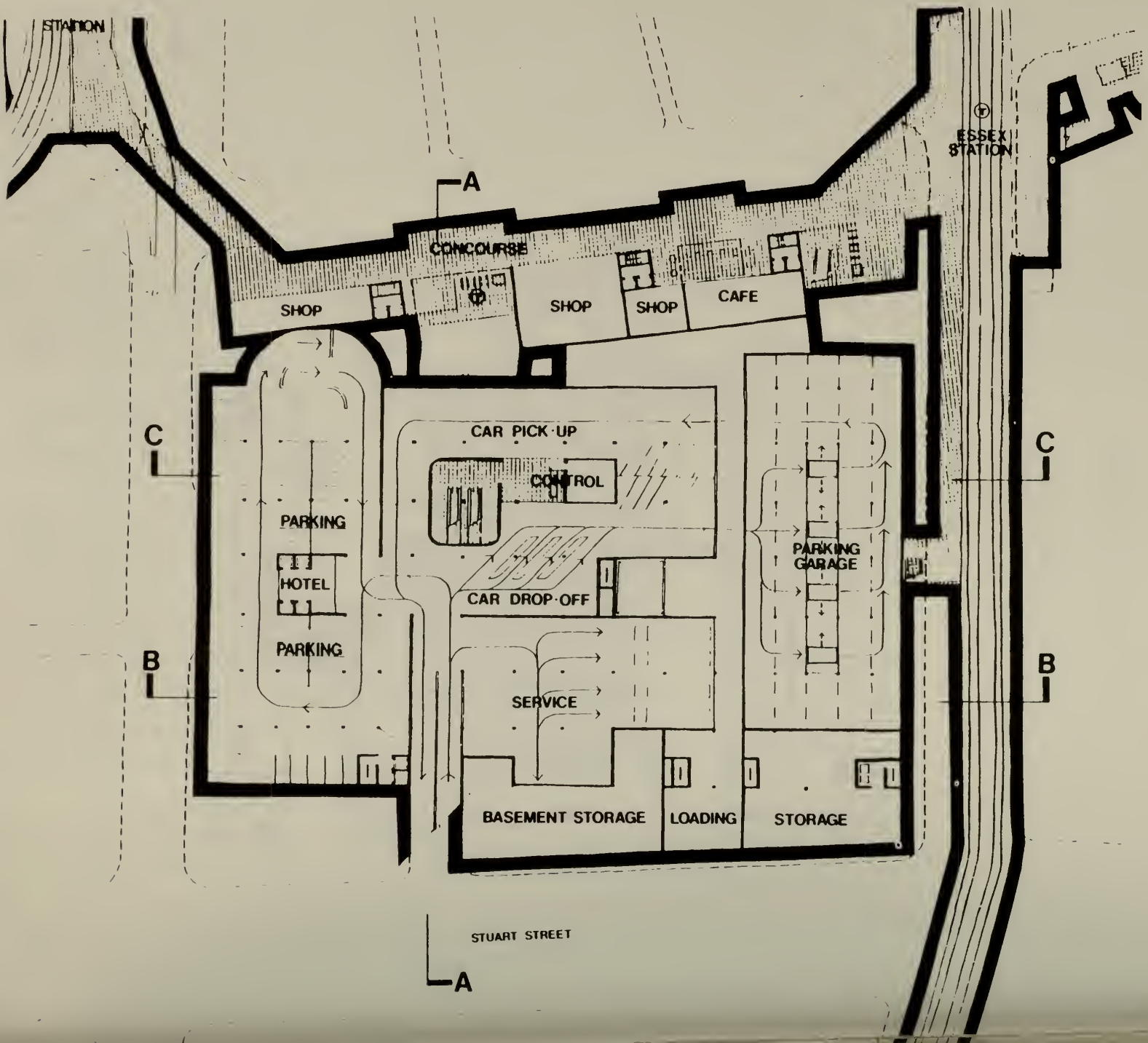
In terms of office space, Smith found that "while the data reveal that there will not be a shortage of space by 1980 neither does it indicate there will be a surplus of space. In fact the supply and demand sides of the equation are basically in equilibrium and ... it would appear that by 1980 a building in the 1 million square foot category [on the Hinge Block] could be added to the inventory of those buildings listed for future consideration without creating an overage in the vacancy rate."

Finally, with regard to the idea of using the money from the density bonus to subsidize three theaters, gallery and museum space, Smith found that these facilities would cost about $6.9 million to build and would generate about 500,000 square feet of additional space for the project. With land selling at the time for $45 a square foot and an FAR of 15, the bonus would be worth $3 an FAR foot, about $1.5 million. He further assumes that the BRA would have allowed the developer to use its one percent art surcharge to help develop the cultural facilities and that the developer could, annually, get an average $80,000 depreciation write-off, $50,000 in additional parking revenues from theater-goers, and $35,000 in additional rents from restaurants and cafes that served the new cultural facilities. This created a need for a $235,000 annual cash flow from rent on the new facilities, about $50 a seat, which Smith wrote "is feasible."



Boston Study Group
1969

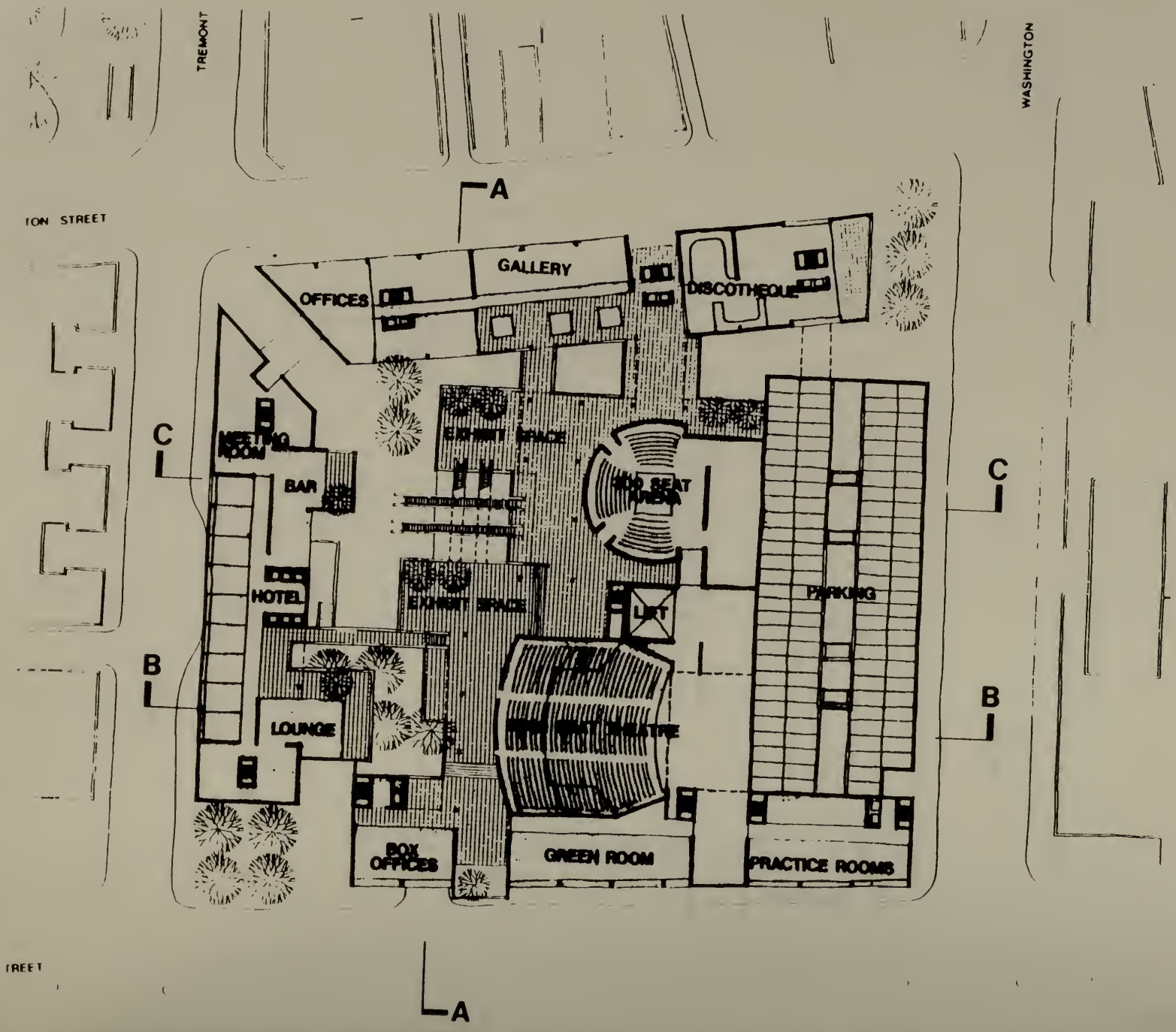
Boston Study Group
1969



HINGE BLOCK

P1
PARKING LEVEL

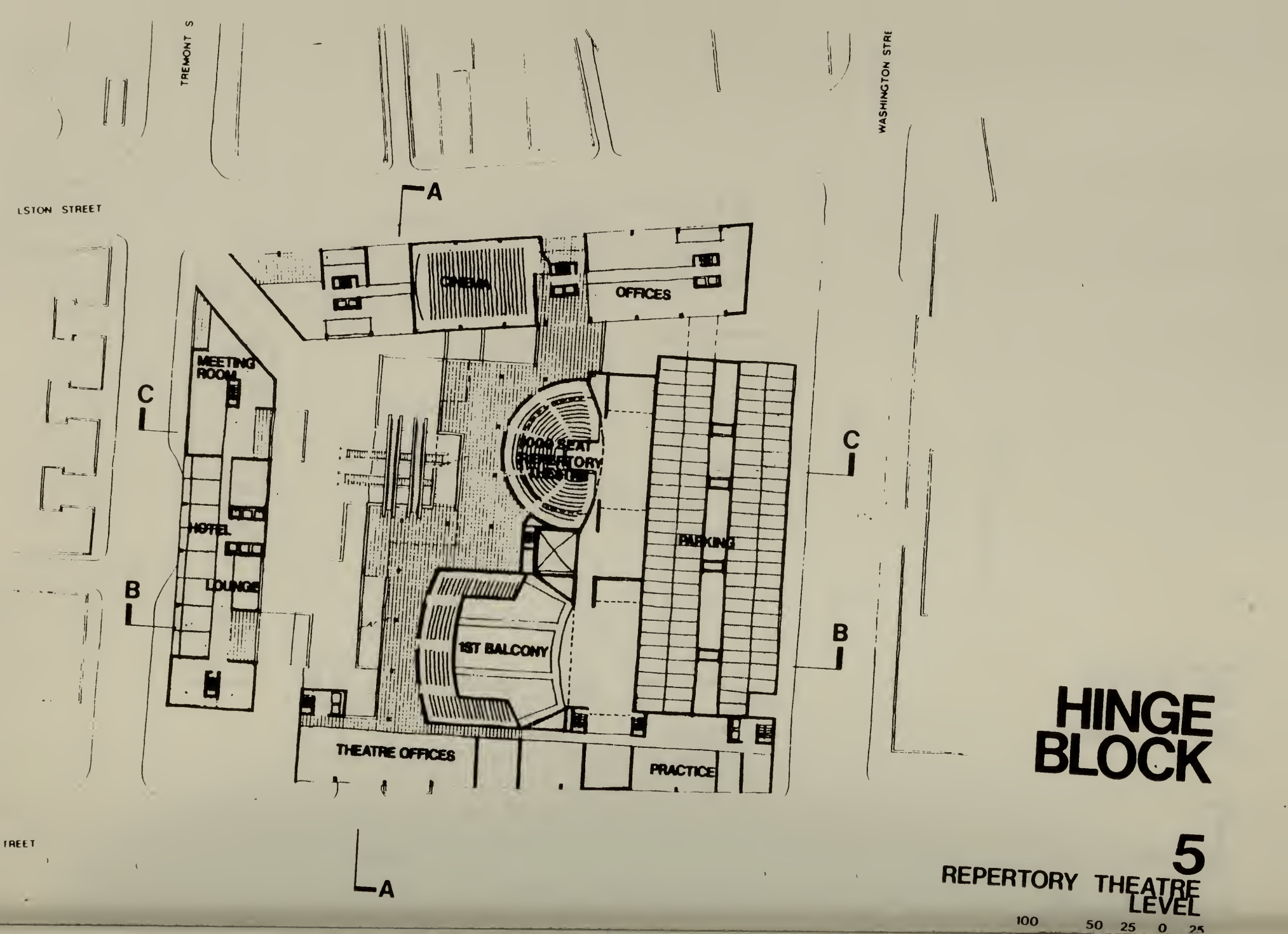
100 50 25 0 25

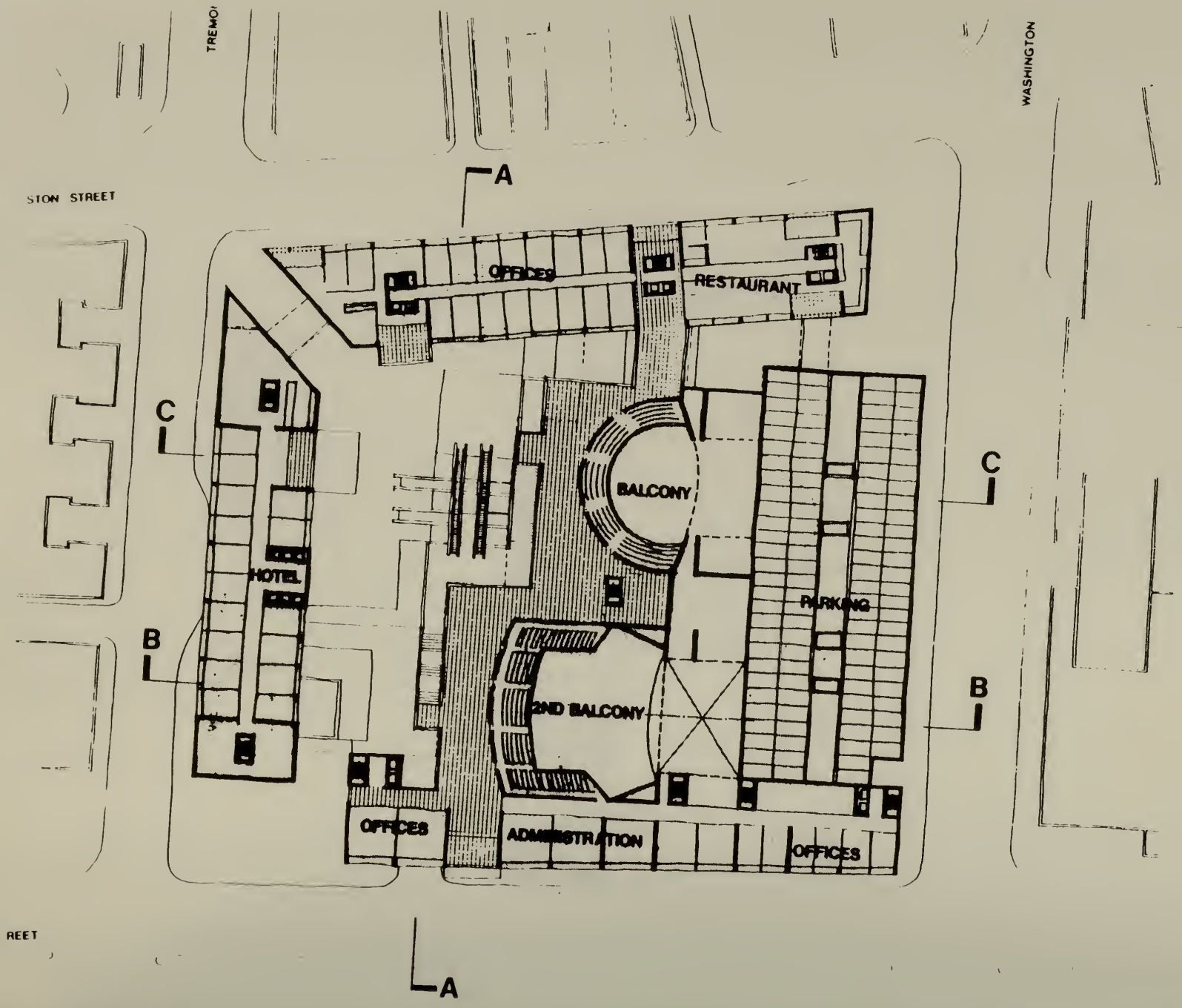


HINGE BLOCK

3
MAIN THEATRE LEVEL

100 50 25 0 25

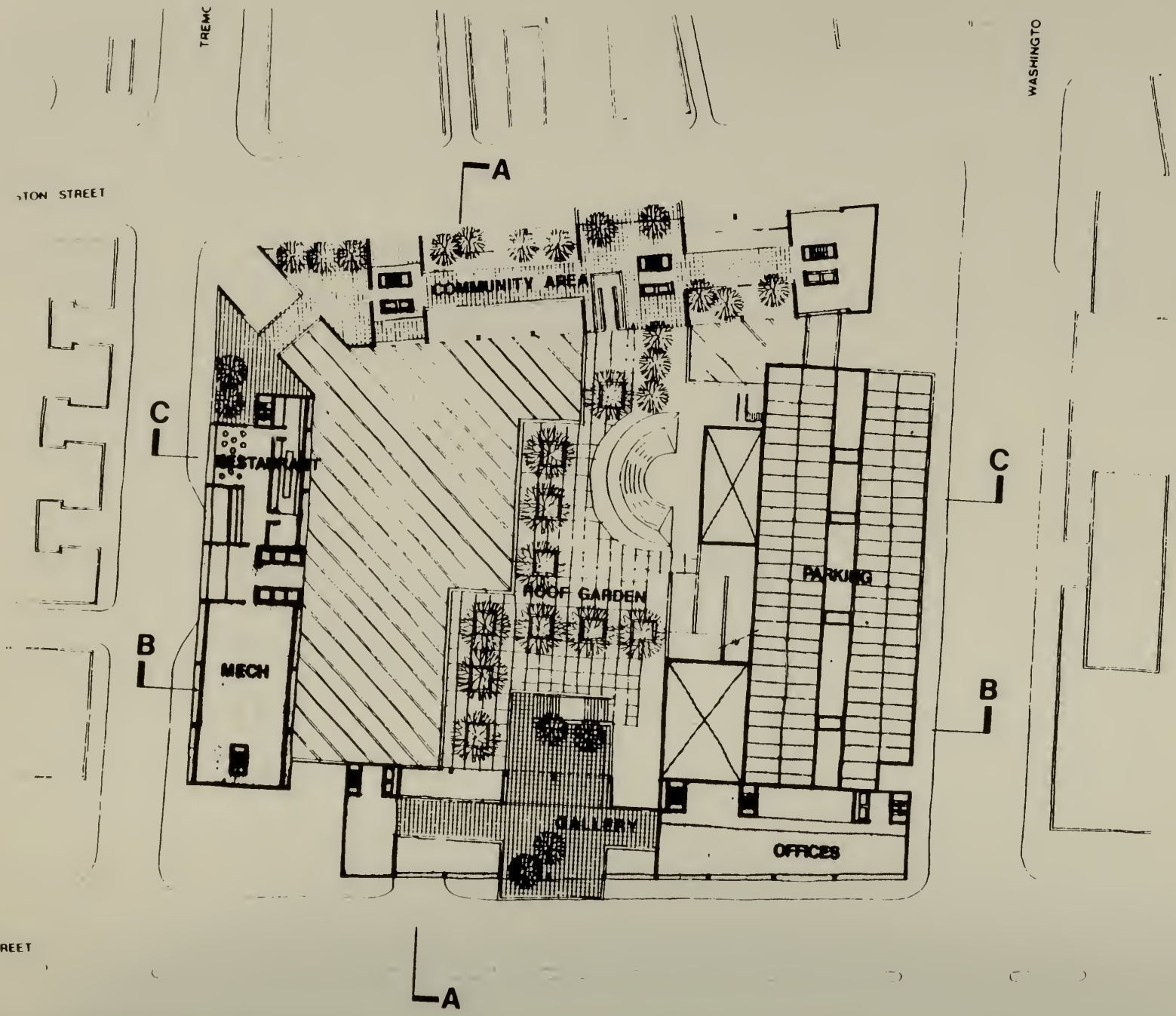

TREMONT S
WASHINGTON STRE
LSTON STREET
TREET
A
A
B
B
C
C
CINEMA
OFFICES
MEETING ROOM
HOTEL
LOUNGE
1000 SEAT REPERTORY THEATRE
PARKING
1ST BALCONY
THEATRE OFFICES
PRACTICE
HINGE BLOCK
5
REPERTORY THEATRE LEVEL
100 50 25 0 25



HINGE BLOCK

7
BALCONY LEVEL

100 50 25 0 25



HINGE BLOCK

9

ROOF GARDEN LEVEL

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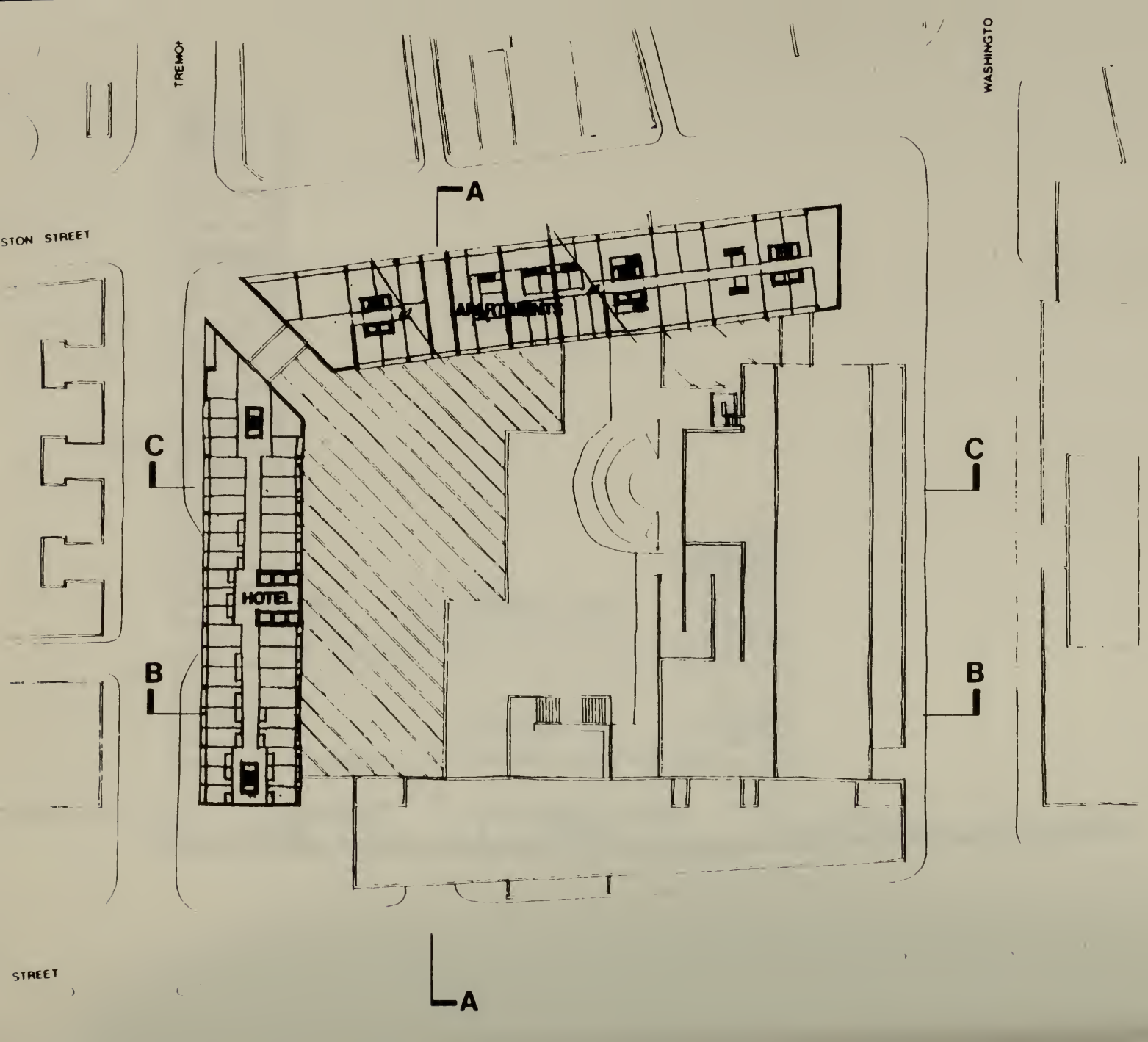
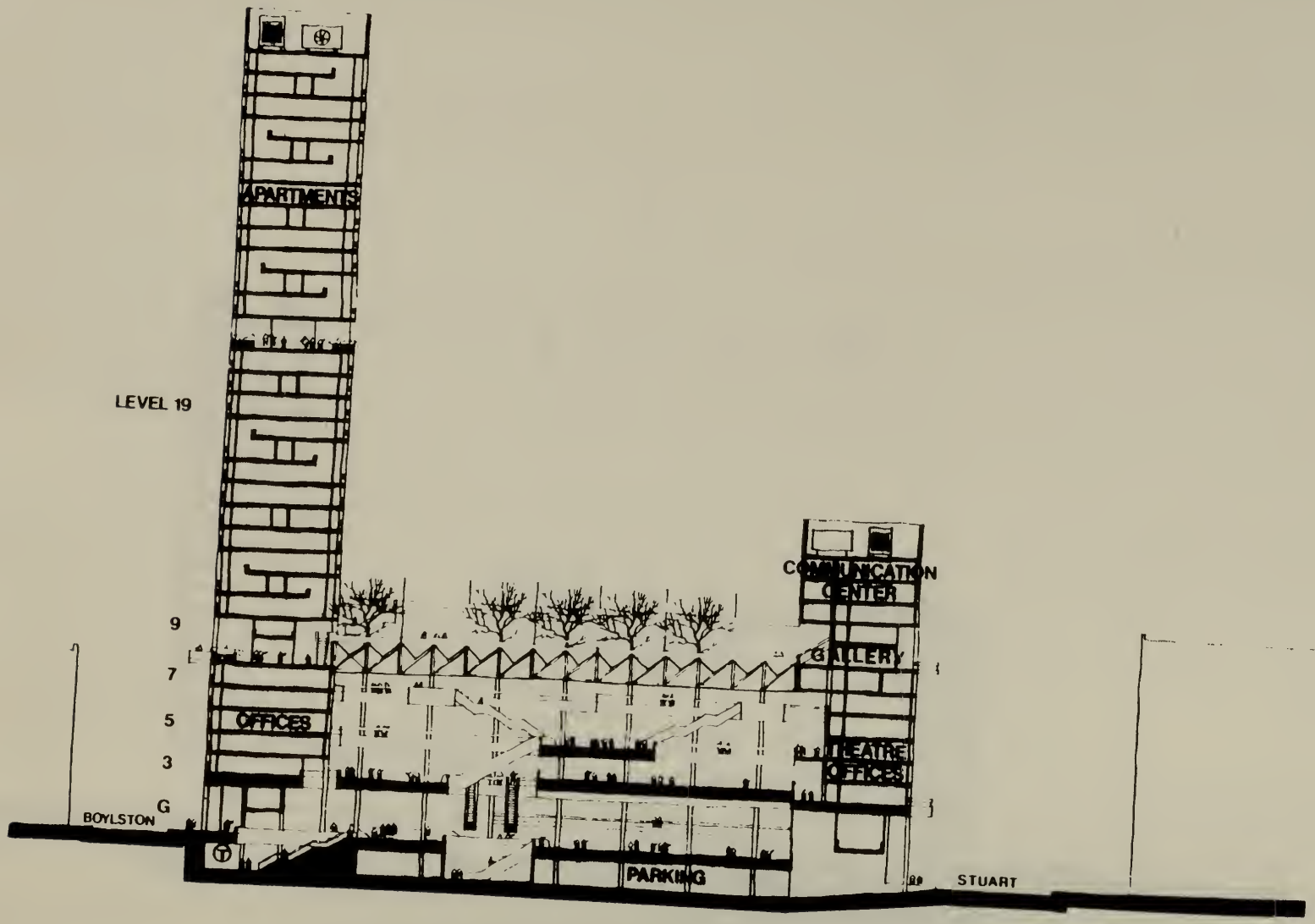


HINGE BLOCK

19

HOUSING · HOTEL LEVEL

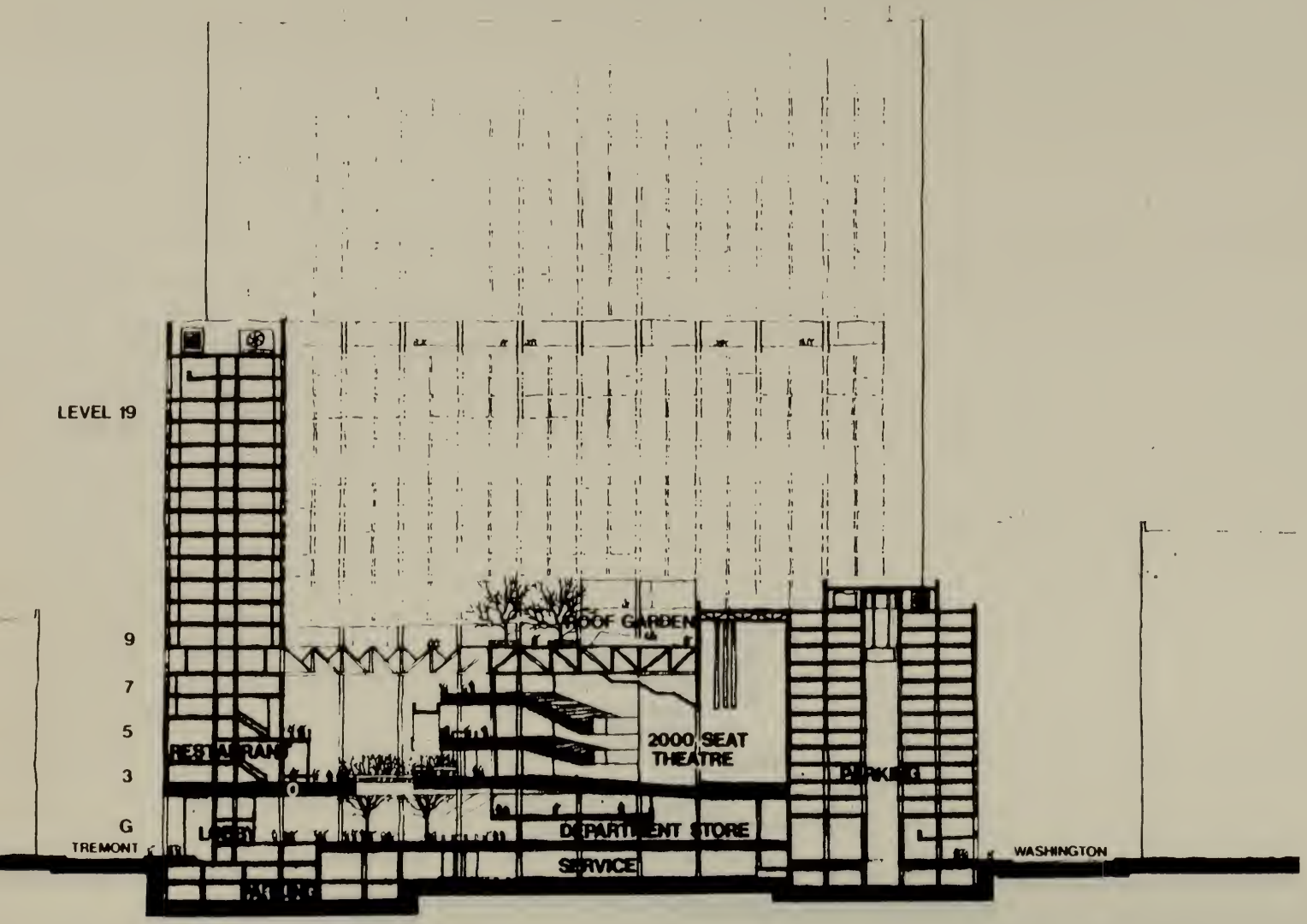
100 50 25 0 25



HINGE BLOCK

A-A SECTION

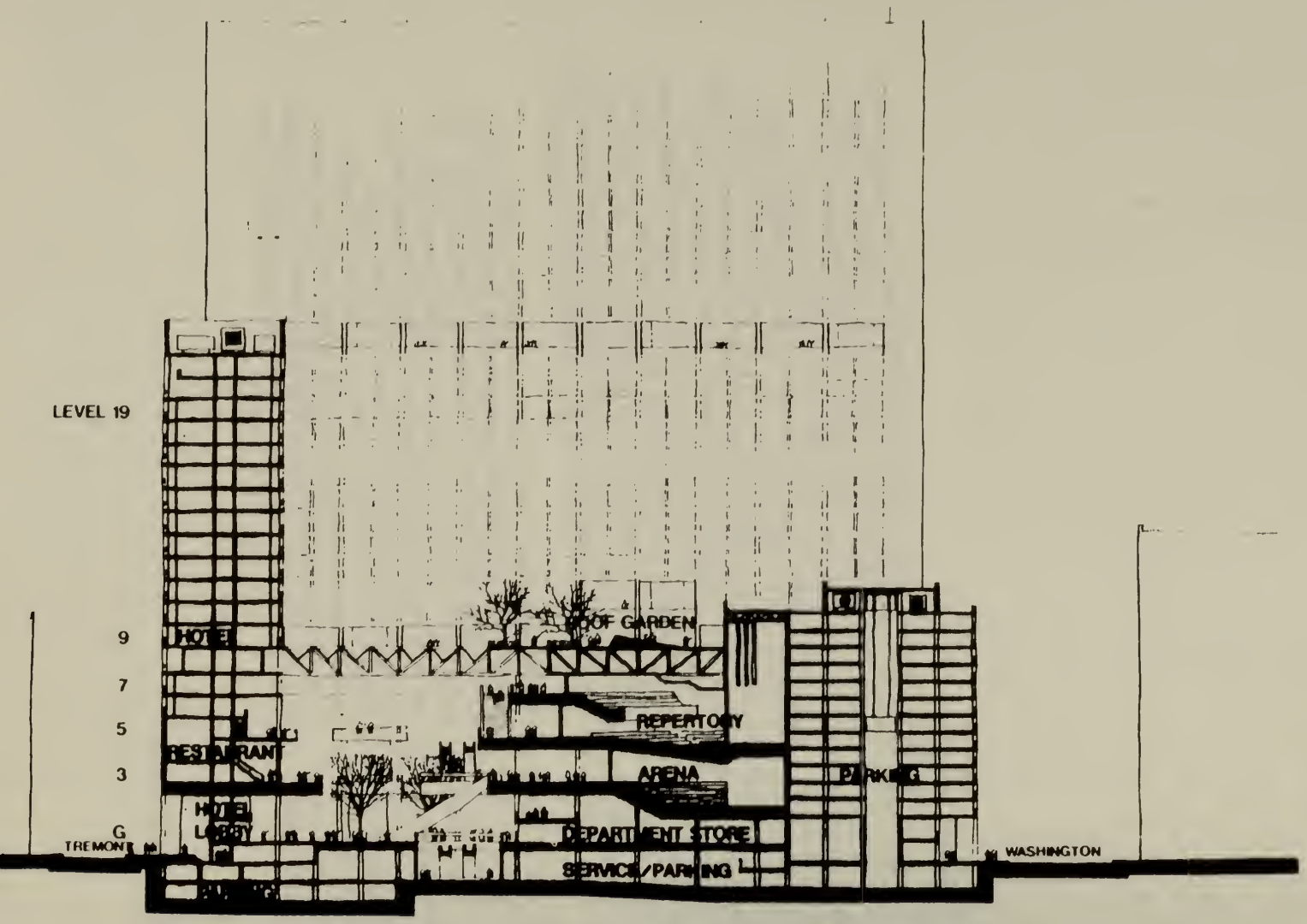
100 50 25 0 25



HINGE BLOCK

B-B
SECTION

100 50 25 0 25



HINGE BLOCK

C-C SECTION

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Entertainment District Study
Interim Report
BRA
1974

This interim report, prepared by the BRA in conjunction with the Park Plaza Civic Advisory Committee, was supposed to help in planning Phase II of the Park Plaza Urban Renewal Plan. This phase included the Hinge Block and the other side of lower Washington Street, which by this time was the thriving Combat Zone. The plan, which also recommended the establishment of the Adult Entertainment District, says the Hinge Block is one of ten potential development sites in the area. The plan recommends a 500-to-750 room hotel on the site, 70,000-to-125,000 square feet of retail facilities, and unnamed cultural uses. The Touraine Building, which had just been renovated into housing would have been retained as would the Boylston Building, and the entire Washington Street frontage.

In a major departure from past proposals, this plan suggested that the major pedestrian connections between the Back Bay/Park Plaza area and the CBD would "occur through a series of shop lined pedestrian ways along Avery, Tremont, and Boylston Streets. This is a change from pervious plans for this section of Boston, which emphasized the continuity of pedestrian movement down Washington Street to the Hinge Block area. The new pedestrian movements now proposed would allow people to bypass the Adult Entertainment Zone and provide a shorter, more direct link between the downtown major retail stores and the Back Bay and Park Plaza specialty shops." The major result of this plan was zoning the area as an Adult Entertainment District. In the wake of this plan the BRA also tried to spruce the area through the construction of the Liberty Tree Park in front of the Boylston Building and by trying, unsuccessfully, to rename the area the Liberty Tree District. During this era the Boylston/Essex connection was also realigned to improve through traffic.

14

PLANNING OBJECTIVES

Amended Park Plaza Urban Renewal Plan
BRA
1975-1977

1975 Interim Report of the Park Plaza Civic Advisory Committee

As part of the state's conditional approval of the Park Plaza Urban renewal plan, a CAC was established to review and develop Park Plaza plans in May 1973. In the fall of 1975 the committee issued an interim report which noted that the committee and the BRA still had differences of opinion over the project, including whether the project should include 650-foot buildings, which would have been allowed on the Hinge Block and other sites.

The report notes that "Phase II is in limbo" and notes that "a major selling point for Park Plaza was the promised demolition of the Combat Zone and the construction of 400 luxury apartments, a hotel, office, and retail facilities, and a 2,000 car parking garage. When this plan encountered heavy skepticism, BRA's developer, Boston Urban Associates, gave some form of assurance that they would submit a concrete proposal at a later date."

"In June 1973 CAC concluded that the BRA proposal for Phase II was neither convincing nor practical. CAC recommended that the BRA prepare a new comprehensive plan for the Phase II area, emphasizing rehabilitation. BRA agreed, but instead, initiated a program of 'immediate action' under which Liberty Tree Park was built; and a Theater Park was discussed. Meanwhile, BRA was successful in rezoning the Combat Zone and unsuccessful in renaming it [the Liberty Tree District]."

"Today there is no development plan for Phase II. The future of the Combat Zone remains shrouded in confusion. BRA will be forced to produce a concrete plan at a later time. Today, BRA only seeks approval of Phase I, the Park Square area."

Park Plaza Urban Renewal Project
May 1977 amended plan

The 1977 amended plan again started the clock running for the Phase II parcels of the Park Plaza Urban Renewal Project. Under the amended plan once construction started on Parcel A-1, on Charles Street South, the BRA had three years to select a developer for the Phase II parcels. Failure to select a developer for the parcels meant they would no longer be included in the Park Plaza Project Area. Extensive plans and an environmental impact report were required before the development of Phase II parcels.

The plan did outline basic guidelines for the development of he Hinge Block (Parcel 4). These guidelines were similar to the guidelines in earlier Park Plaza plans for the site. The permitted use were: commercial, residential, office, hotel, entertainment, open space, and cultural. No parking was required. No major structure above 125 feet was allowed at the corner of Boylston and Tremont Streets. A 650-foot maximum height was set on the rest of the site. The FAR was 15, with a bonus of up to 17 if certain desired cultural facilities were provided on the site. Vehicular access was from Washington and Stuart Streets; pedestrian easements through the parcel from Tremont to Washington Street were required as were easements from the northwest and northeast corners of the site to the center of the parcel. Pedestrian connections to the Boylston and Essex Subway stations were also required. No historic buildings were preserved.

Parcel 5, on the other side of Washington Street, could have been the site of a 450-foot building with an FAR of 15. Allowed uses were commercial, office, residential, hotel, entertainment, and parking.

The sites were never advertised. The Park Square redevelopment began, starting with the construction of the State Transportation Building and continuing with the Four Seasons Hotel and Heritage on the Garden. The last major parcel is the Parcel A-1, the Park Square Parcel-to-Parcel II site. The BRA recently tentatively designated a developer for housing on the site as part of the joint development of the Park Square site and a mixed-income housing development in the South End that will include 36 units of affordable transitional housing for low-income mothers with small children.

Lower Washington Street Area
Program for Revitalization
BRA
1978

This document, which still retains the Park Plaza Phase II boundaries, but now identifies the site as Parcel 31, calls for the creation of "a housing court" on the block.

The report notes that "Amenities that include the most strategic location in downtown Boston - on the edge of Boston Common and the entertainment district - should be enough to generate a new market [for housing]. It is the sort of residential market which Greenwich Village has captured - a place in the City where both daytime and especially nighttime activity is maximized. This unique location for downtown living should be able to capitalize on some of the envisioned upsurge in demand for housing by young professionals." The report further lauds housing as a use in the area because housing can be built in "discreet building elements - small structures, rehabilitated structures, low-rise or high-rise ... [and housing] provides 24 hour activity [that] will not only provide automatic surveillance for the area, but will provide a market for entertainment activities and will act as a pressure group to help reduce the intimidating elements in the Adult Entertainment District."

The report further notes: "The success of this form of housing will depend to a large extent on how the housing environment is designed in this difficult area, and its relationship or non-relationship with adult entertainment uses, which, although dwindling at present, will probably continue to exist in some form."

"Fortunately the LaGrange Street block is so organized as to provide solutions to these problems. The three strong uses in the block, the Hotel Touraine, the YMCU, and Union Warren Building, are so disposed in the block to act as the first building elements of 'a housing court' which would be isolated from the Adult Entertainment Zone proper, and would orient onto Tremont Street and the Boston Common. The rears of all three buildings are relatively interesting architecturally (as opposed to the usual backs of 19th century buildings that face onto alleys). This is an advantage which can be exploited in the design of a housing court in the center of the block. Finally, the Hotel Touraine is ideally situated to act as both the architectural and residential anchor to the housing court." Under this plan, most of the building's historic buildings would have been preserved. By 1978, Jacob Worth's, the YMCU, the Hayden Building, and the YMCU, had all been named as landmark buildings by the Boston Landmarks Commission.

In a similar vein, high-rise housing is proposed on the Avery Street block, a move which also called for the destruction of 39 Boylston Street (the Edison Building, now used as St. Francis House).

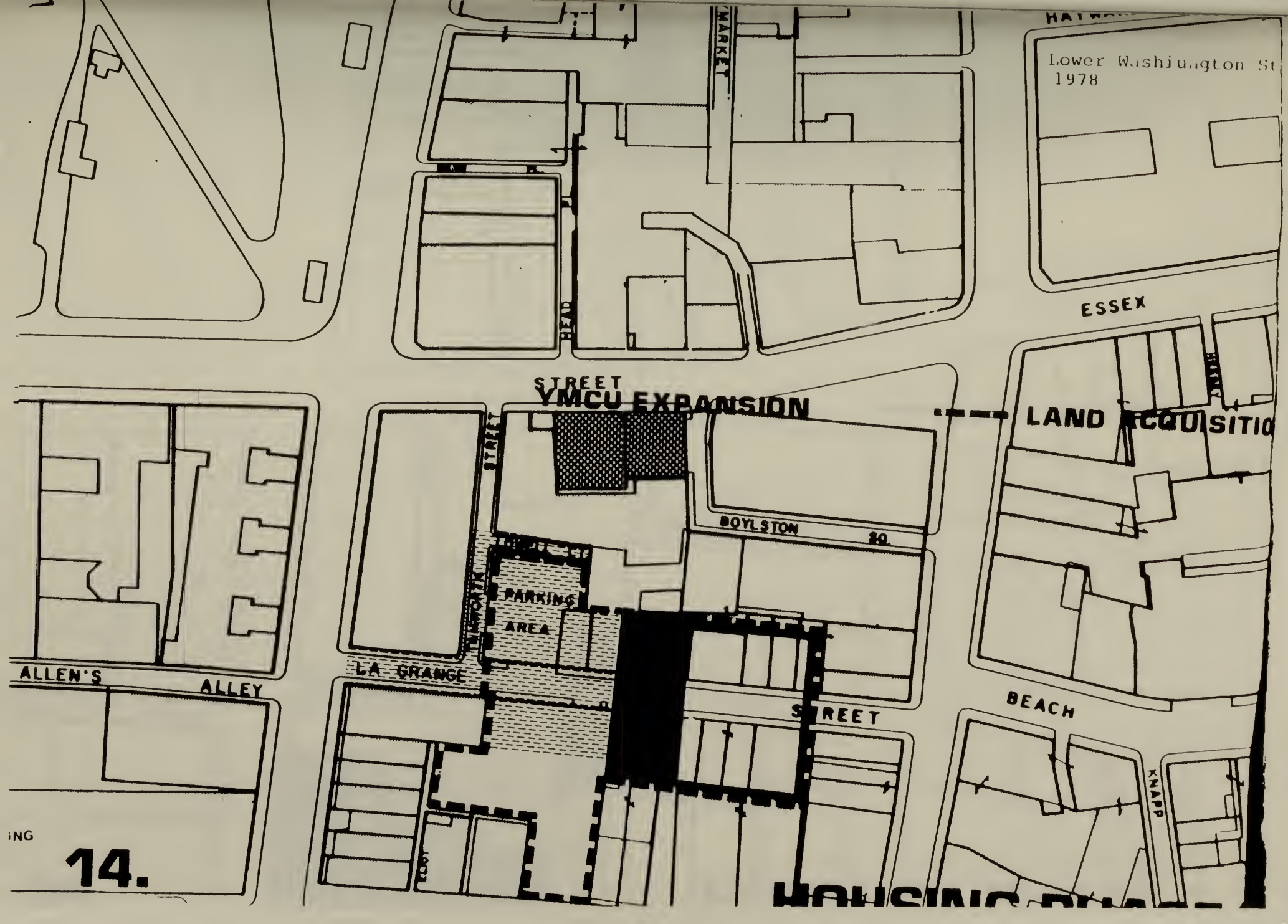
The proposed housing have been phased, with the first building being a 230-foot high, 220-unit, building located on an interior portion of the Hinge Block that includes what is now the Downtown Cafe, the former Half-Price Book and Video, the Glass Slipper and the old Good Time Charlies (now an art gallery). A parking garage at the rear of the tower in the middle of the Hinge Block was also proposed. Phase II called for 170 units in a six-story building on the Tremont/Stuart Street corner. Phase III called for 272 units in a 290-foot tower on Parcel 30 from Avery Street to the State Theater. Phase IV called for a 250-

foot, 220-unit building on Parcel 30, between Boylston Street and Haymarket Place, a site that included the Franciscan's building.

From South

From East

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT


Lower Washington St
1978
MARKET
ESSEX
STREET
YMCU EXPANSION
LAND ACQUISITIO
BOYLSTON
SQ.
PARKING
AREA
LA GRANGE
ALLEN'S
ALLEY
STREET
BEACH
KNAPP
14.

MARKET
ESSEX
STREET
LAND ACQUISITIO
BOYLSTON SQ.
PARKING
AREA
LA GRANGE
STREET
BEACH
ALLEY
KNAPP
15
HOUSING PHASE 2

ESSEX
STREET
LAND ACQUISITIO
BOYLSTON SQ.
PARKING
AREA
LA GRANGE
STREET
BEACH
STREET
KNAPP
ALLEN'S ALLEY
HOUSING PHASE

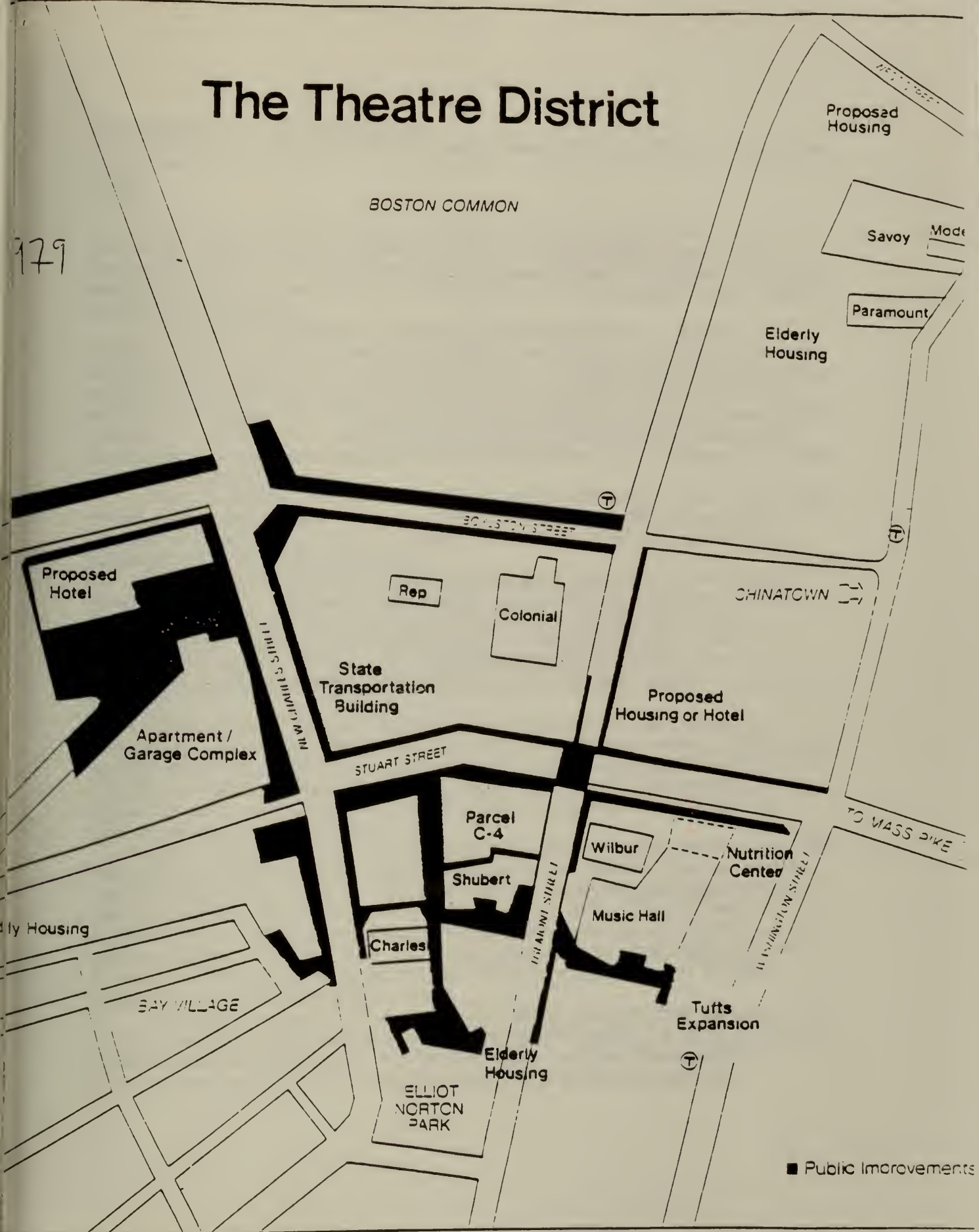
ESSEX
STREET
LAND ACQUISITION
BOYLSTON SQ.
PARKING AREA
LA GRANGE
STREET
BEACH
ALLEN'S ALLEY
KNAPP
La Grange St to be re-opened for pedestrians when the area is consolidated
HOUSING PHASE 4
17.

Lower Washington St
1978
$700,000
$41 / SQ. FT.
$225,000
$25 / SQ. FT.
$200,000
$30 / SQ. FT.
$500,000
$35 / SQ. FT.
$1,000,000
$150 / SQ. FT.
STREET
ESSEX
$200,000
$30 / SQ. FT.
BOYLSTON SQ.
$140,000
PARKING AREA
$18 / SQ. FT.
$150,000
$45,000
$16 / SQ. FT.
LA GRANGE
STREET
ALLEN'S ALLEY
BEACH
$450,000
$26 / SQ. FT.
$400,000
$46 / SQ. FT.
$150,000
$27 / SQ. FT.
KNAPP
LAND COSTS

Boston's Theater District: a program for revitalization
BRA
1979

This is a short document put out in the summer before the 1979 mayoral election. The document included Ben Thompson's first recommendations for the district (many of which are repeated in his 1988 work on the site as part of the development of the Midtown Cultural District Plan). Little mention is given to the Hinge Block except in a section that noted that "Since June 1978 developer interest has increased in the [Theater] District and in accordance with the lower Washington Street report policies." The report claims that interest is active in proposals to renovate the Savoy block, the Liberty Tree and Boylston buildings, the Loew's block, Parcel C-4, and the LaGrange Street block. On the Hinge Block, the report says that "a developer is actively pursuing the feasibility of locating a 500 room new hotel in the central and vacant portion of this block."

The Theatre District



179

Communications Technology Center
City of Boston/BRA Application for a design development grant from the National Endowment for the Arts
1982

The idea of a cultural center, housing, and even a hotel began to fade in the 1980s. Instead the city began to consider a high-rise office tower on the site, anchored by a new communications center, an idea perhaps taken from the earlier plans for a communications center as part of the proposed Boston Study Group cultural complex.

In 1982 the city applied to the National Endowment for the Arts for a design grant to help in the development of a communications center on the site. According to the proposal, the key to the mixed-use project was a "central media programming facility, as an [sic] component of a larger mixed-use project, that would place Boston in the forefront of the expanding cable/video/communications industry. ... The facility ... would contain a variety of uses including production and post-production activities, teleconferencing facilities, studio space, and mobile production capabilities."

The development would have included an 800,000 square foot "theme" office tower, at least 200 units of housing, a communications/media center, public spaces, and the Communications Center. The proposal retains the Boylston Building, which was being renovated.

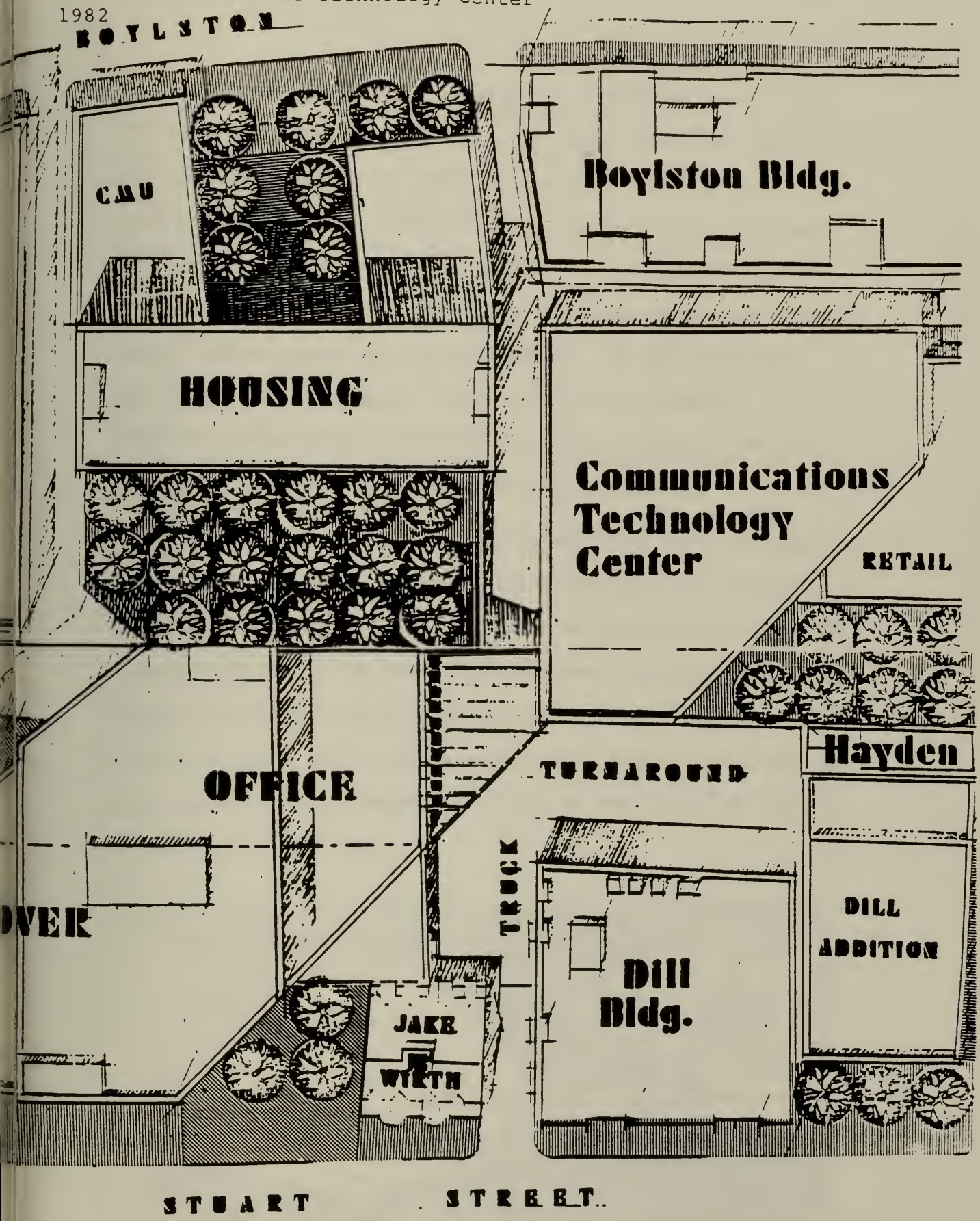
In his supporting letter to the NEA application, then-mayor Kevin White wrote that the new complex would be a key part of reviving the Theater District: "Central to the revitalization strategy for the [Theater] District is the parcel of land historically identified as the "hinge block" ... this square block, with a concept of conbining [sic] new development with historic preservation, is of utmost importance to my goal of creating a new and exciting urban dynamic for the City."

White added: ""The proposal to create a downtown Communications Technology Center that offers state of the art technology for media programming activity represents a significant advance for our expanding broadcast/video industry. Additionally, the impact of this facility on the surrounding legitimate theater theaters, by offering the possibility to produce and market a Boston cultural product, will be tremendous."

By this time the Boylston Building renovations were becoming a reality, with the help of tax credits and $3 million in federal funds. However, the use of the new building was up in the air. Wang computers, which had originally agreed to use the building, had pulled out of the deal. As part of the Communications Center Plan, the city and the Chinatown Economic Development Council, which was redoing the building, tried to convince Cablevision to set up facilities in the building. These negotiations did not pan out and the building was ultimately redeveloped as the China Trade Center.

An interesting part of this plan was the idea of using ice thermal storage to cool the building. Ice would have been stored under Parcel C-4 which is next to an abandoned subway tunnel. Across the street, the State Transportation Building, had large tanks for water thermal storage in its sub basement.

Commuunications Technology Center
1982

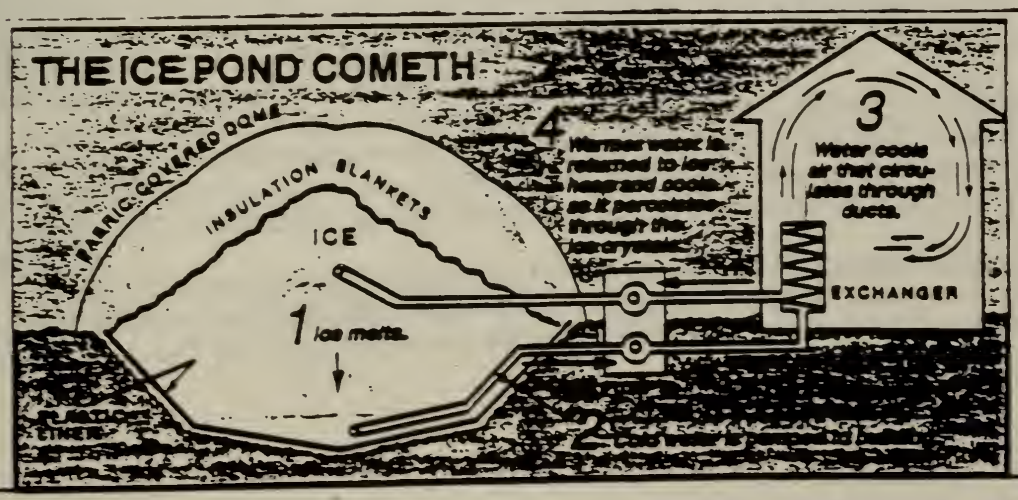


Scheme B

Communications Technology Center
1982

The BRA is currently implementing a research grant on ice thermal storage for the Department of Energy. As current plans for an office tower and a media center would consume enormous cooling loads, we are actively seeking ways of adapting the new ice thermal storage technology to Parcel 4. Across the street the State Transportation Building has provided large tanks for water thermal storage in its sub-basement. We would like to employ the more complex but space efficient ice storage. Normally in new construction one adds another basement for this storage or utilizes the space between the grade beams.

Parcel 4 lies next to an abandoned subway tunnel running down Tremont Street to The Hotel Bradford which could serve as additional space for thermal storage or conduits from an off site central heating/cooling facility and thermal storage bank. Because the Entertainment/Theater District seems unique in typifying weekly cooling peaks, we are most anxious to explore the possibilities and potential of shaving weekly cooling peaks with this new technology.



Downtown Crossing: An Economic Strategy Plan
BRA
1983

This plan, prepared with the assistance of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, (SOM) Boston, retains the concept of a high-rise technology center on the site. The report asserts that the site "provides a prime opportunity for the design of a landmark building that will visually connect the high-rises of the Back Bay with those of the Financial District."

The report notes that "the Hinge Block is potentially the focus of strong development pressures from the blocks immediately surrounding it: office and hotel uses from the Back Bay, the Theater District to the south, the Medical Center and Chinatown and the retail core to the northeast. In addition, the location of the parcel on the Common makes it highly attractive for housing. Adding to these pressures is the designation of the eastern edge of the parcel as part of the adult entertainment overlay zoning district. It would be difficult to find another block in downtown Boston which is the focus of as many development pressures but it would be equally difficult to find a more prominent and imageable downtown location."

"What is needed on Parcel 31 is a new use - one that is different from, yet compatible with neighboring uses. Also needed is a distinctive use - one that brings identity and attraction to the lower Washington Street area. A use that would fulfill these needs is that of a Communications Technology Center. A program for a center of this type could include: 40,000 square feet of ground-floor retail space for a "Technology Fair"; 10,000 SF for teleconference and teleport link. The Technology Center should be designed in such a way that the public would be drawn to sample the newest developments in consumer electronics as powerfully as those interested in food and fashion are drawn to Quincy Market.

The Technology Center should also house post-production facilities. This would include film and video editing; audio transfer and editing, and final assembly processes. While the size and location of Parcel 31 is not well suited for production use, post-production activities could be well accommodated here and could provide the only film processing service in Boston.

The Technology Center could also be the downtown location for a link to a local Teleport, similar to one currently planned in Manhattan. The Teleport offers access to satellite systems and can be connected to a centralized teleconference facility which should be provided at Parcel 31.

The Communications Technology Center should occupy the center of the parcel and should stretch to Washington Street with its entrance at the corner of Washington and Kneeland. The colorful and eye-catching high tech goods featured in the Technology Fair should be prominently featured to attract the public to lower Washington Street. The post-production facilities, which are not public-oriented should be located internally on the parcel.

With the communications center anchoring the redevelopment of Parcel 31, other uses that meet development pressures and that satisfy the city's planning objectives can be suggested for the remainder of the site. An ideal program for this site would include office space, housing, recreation space, retail space, and parking."

Noting the strength of the Back Bay office market and the construction of the State Transportation Building, the report suggests "a major office building for this parcel as well as some office use along Washington Street. Approximately

400,000 to 600,000 square feet of office space could be held in a major building with parking for 200 cars underground. The presence of a building of this size would not only provide the necessary economic support for the Technology Fair but would symbolize the renaissance of the area. This site provides a prime opportunity for the design of a landmark building that will visually connect the high-rises of the Back Bay with those of the Financial District."

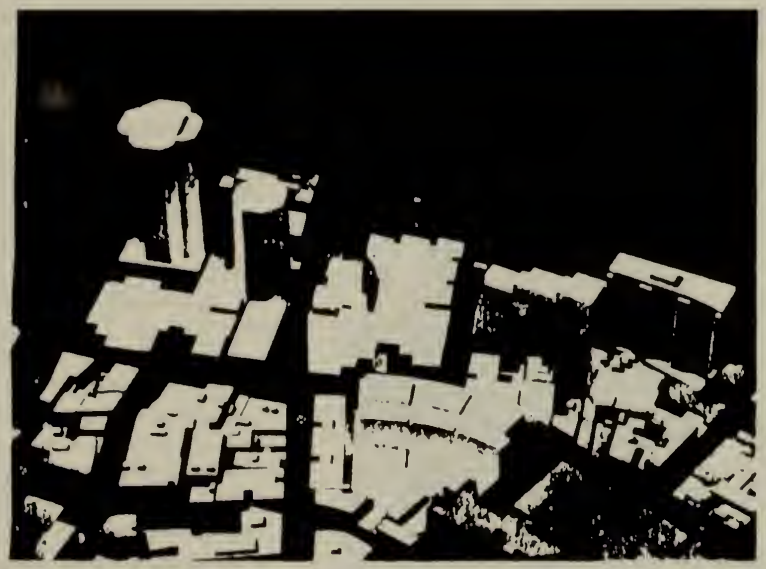
A 200-unit housing development was suggested on Boylston Street above a base with parking. The Touraine Building is retained and the YMCU "would be substantially relocated into new space within the base of the housing structure, with the highly ornate facade and entry lobby of the existing building retained."

Retail and restaurant uses were along Washington Street where an 80-foot building height would be retained. Retail uses were also iocated on the ground floor along Kneeland Street, at the Touraine Building, and on Boylston STreet buildings.

The report further notes that "important to revitalization" of the parcel and the lower Washington Street area is the "reuse of the now-closed MBTA station located on LaGrange Street. ... The station should be included in the design of a new 'Beach Street Market' located next to the Hayden Building on Washington Street."

On Parcel 30 the plan calls for a major redevelopment that retains only the Mason's Building. The project included housing on the Common, offices uses on Washington Street, and service retail (including a supermarket). The housing would have been 155 feet high. The office building would have been no higher than 12 stories on Avery Street and eight stories on Essex Street. The building itself would have been a "substantial, a midrise" with 300,000 to 400,000 square feet.

Parcels 30, 31, 32.



Parcels 30, 31, and 32 frame the southeastern corner of the Common and offer commanding views of the City

The redevelopment of Parcels 30, 31 and 32 is important both for retail expansion and for the image of the Lower Washington Street area. These parcels feature prominently in the Central Business District context as part of the frame of parcels that surround the Common, and they can easily be seen across the Common from Beacon Hill and the Back Bay. Because of this prominent location, the design and massing of these parcels is of key importance in setting a new image for the Lower Washington Street area.

Parcel 32 is located immediately to the west of the Keith Block. As shown in the plan on this page, the recommended future use of this parcel is housing facing the Common with retail at grade along Tremont Street. Spectacular city-wide views across the Common from this parcel, and from all property along Tremont Street, make redevelopment highly attractive. In addition, the increased market for retail and increased activity levels generated by housing will help reinforce the City's goals for the improvement of the Lower Washington Street area. Complementing any new housing located along Tremont Street are several existing residential structures, including the recently renovated elderly housing project on Mason and Avery.

To the south of Parcel 32 is Parcel 30, bounded by Avery, Tremont, Boylston, and Washington Streets. With much of the rentable space on this parcel currently unoccupied, the area is well-suited for a major redevelopment effort. Most of the existing buildings on this parcel appear inappropriate for projected uses, either because of excessive depth, unsuitable structural spans, or poor building condition. The exception to this is the Masons Building at the corner of Tremont and Boylston, which is physically sound and fully occupied.

As shown on the plan on the following page, the most appropriate distribution of new uses on this parcel include housing along the Common, and office uses along Washington Street. This block is also a prime location for service retail (including a supermarket) to meet the needs of the growing residential population of this area. Based on current zoning laws, all buildings within 100 feet of the Common are restricted to 155 feet in height. The housing along Tremont Street should not exceed this height. A parking structure would be located in the center of the Block and would be fronted with retail at grade on Tremont and Boylston Streets. The roof of the parking structure would serve as an open courtyard for the residents. Approximately two hundred housing units could be accommodated on this site with parking for each unit.

In response to the existing massing and scale of Lower Washington, the office building on Parcel 30 is conceived as a mid-rise structure stepping down from a twelve-story maximum height on Avery Street to eight stories on Essex Street. In this way, a comfortable sense of enclosure can be given to Liberty Tree Park, and maximum sun exposure is gained for the office building and its entry courtyard. Since the site area for the office structure would be substantial, a mid-rise

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ɔt could hold roughly
0,000 to 400,000 square
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der the building.

uth of Parcel 30 is Parcel
Commonly called "the
ınge Block" (since this block
s at the "hinge" in the tran-
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the western portion of the
ty to the north-south axis
the waterside portion of the
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ıfficult to find a more promi-
ent and imageable down-
town location.

Boylston Building

Young Men's Christian Union

Parking

Rehabilitated Buildings

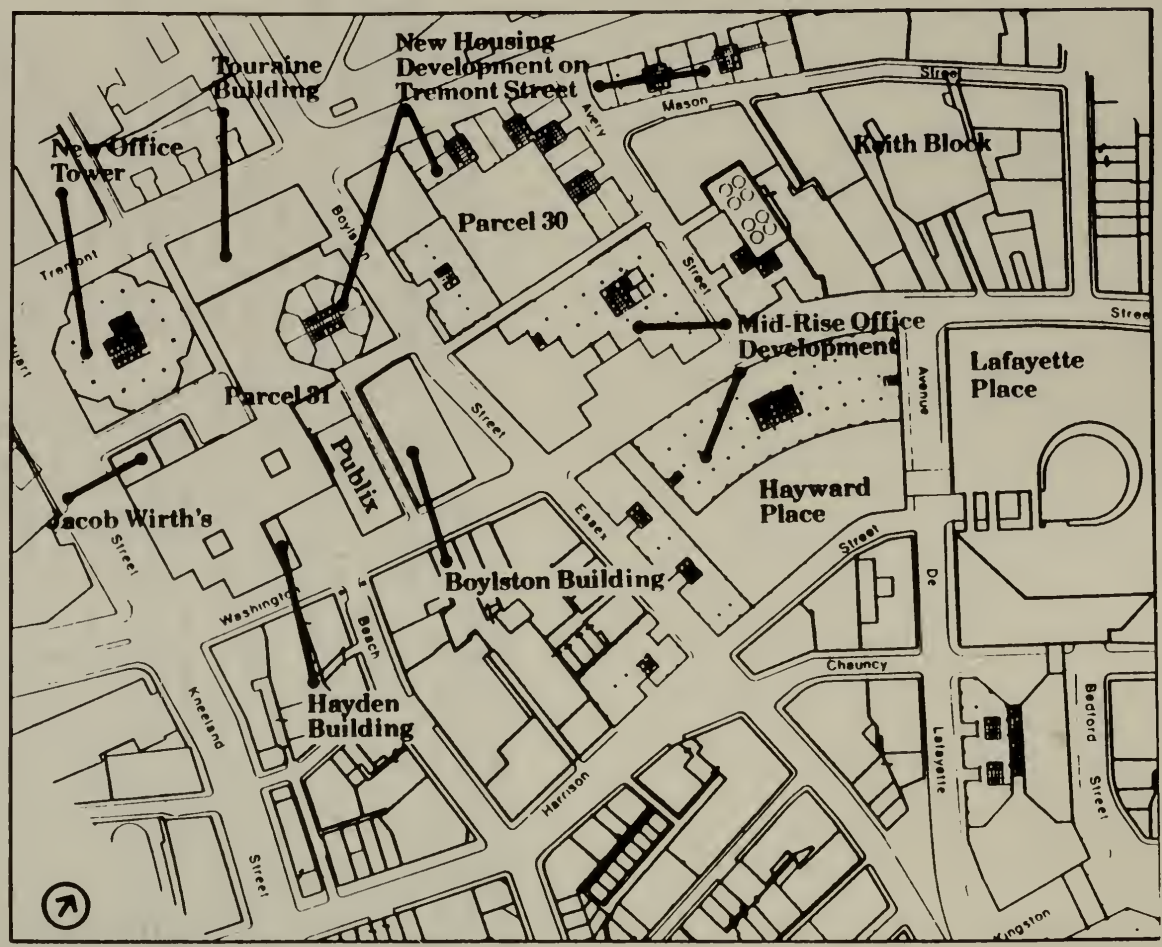
New Retail/Restaurant/ Entertainment

Located on Parcel 31 are several historic buildings that should be saved, in whole or in part. Four of these buildings are designated as landmarks by the Boston Landmark Commission. These are the Boylston Building, the Young Men's Christian Union, Jacob Wirth's Restaurant, and the Hayden Building. The Boylston Building, located at the corner of Boylston and Washington Streets, was built in 1887 and is significant technologically as an example of the transition from traditional masonry construction to skeleton-framed construction. The Young Men's Christian Union was built in 1875. Its entry facade is an outstanding example of High

Victorian Gothic institutional architecture. Jacob Wirth's Restaurant, located on Kneeland Street, is the only remaining Greek Revival bowfront residential building in the Theater District. Built in 1844, the building was converted to a restaurant in the late nineteenth century and has changed little since then. The Hayden Building, built in 1875, is one of the last surviving commercial buildings in Boston by the eminent architect H.H. Richardson, and sits at the corner of LaGrange and Washington Streets.

Jacob Wirth's Restaurant

The biggest challenge in the redevelopment of Parcel 31, is to find an appropriate identity for a place on which so many different pressures converge. What is needed on Parcel 31 is a new use—one that is different from, yet compatible with, neighboring uses. Also needed is a distinctive use—one that brings identity and attraction to the Lower Washington Street area. A use that would fulfill these needs is that of a Communications Technology Center. A program for a center of this type could include: 40,000 SF of ground floor retail space for a "Technology Fair"; 10,000 SF for post-production facilities; and 10,000 SF for teleconference and teleport link. The Technology Center should be designed in such a way that the public would be drawn to sample the newest developments in consumer electronics as powerfully as those interested in food and fashion are drawn to Quincy Market.



Typical upper level plan

New Office Development

New Housing Development

Note: Development configuration is for illustrative purposes only and should not be construed as a specific proposal for any particular parcel.

Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, Chicago
Prepared for the BRA and the Cultural District Task Force
1988

As part of the development of the Midtown Cultural District Plan, the city hired Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, Chicago, the designers of the widely-hailed Rowe's Wharf development, to study various configurations and uses for the Hinge Block and for the nearby, privately-owned parking lot next to the Shubert Theater (Parcel C-4).

The SOM study examined different configurations and uses for the site. SOM ultimately called for developing three new buildings on the site: a 155-foot high residential building on Boylston Street between the Boylston Building (now the China Trade Center) and the YMCU, a 155-foot high office building at the corner of Washington and Stuart Streets, and a higher, approximately 250-foot building at the Stuart/Tremont corner across from the Shubert parking lot. This mid-rise building would step up to a higher but slender building on the Shubert site. The SOM scheme uses the interior of the block as a huge open space surrounded by complimentary uses.

According to the SOM study: "By placing a taller building (250 feet) at the Tremont/Stuart Street corner of the Hinge Block, this historic center to the Midtown District begins to have a presence in the skyline from the Common and it becomes a focal point looking up Stuart Street from Copley Square, and begins to extend the overall district massing up towards a suggested hotel tower (325 feet) on Parcel C-4 [the Shubert lot]. A taller building on this particular corner of the Hinge Block also adds minimal new shadows to the interior of the block.

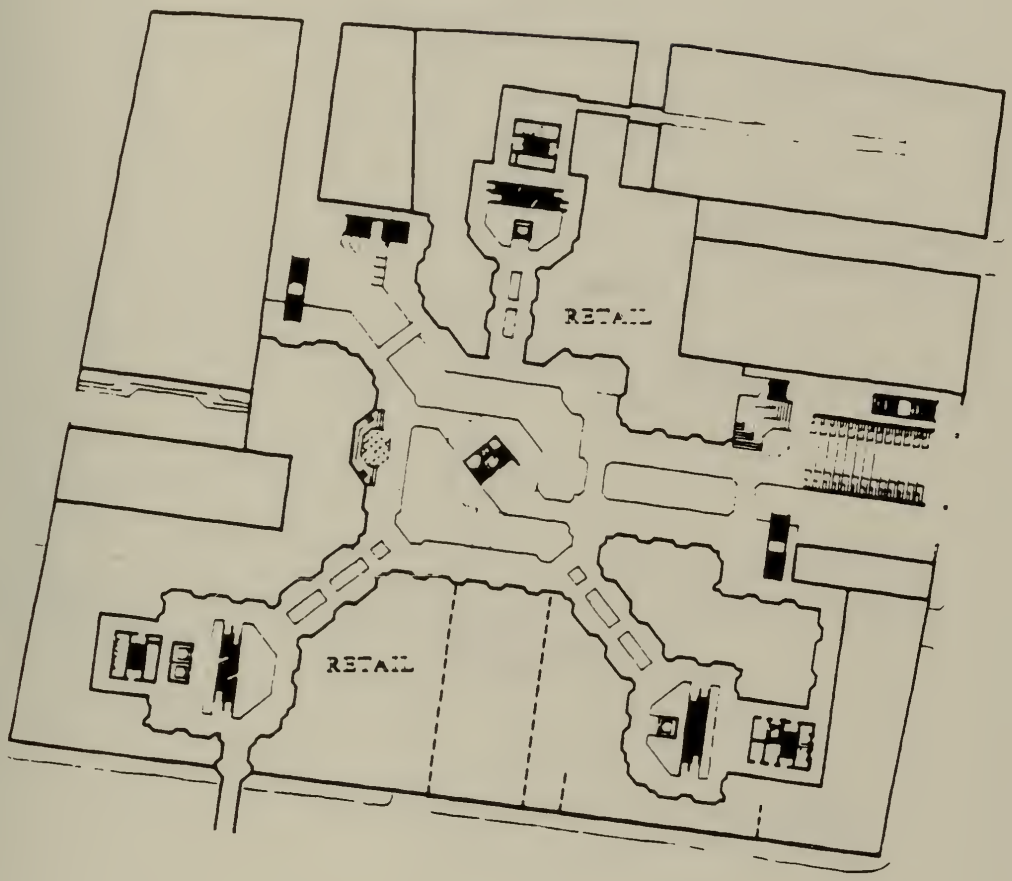
The SOM study added that the Shubert lot, "by virtue of the view and shadow studies was deemed an appropriate location for a tower that would be the 'campanile' (landmark or beacon) locating the district in the overall skyline of the city." Because the building would have a small floor plate and would be near existing residential areas, planners suggested that it be used either for housing or for a hotel above a mixed-use base that would include cultural facilities.

SOM also looked at different configuration for the central public area. According to SOM: "One configuration (Scheme A) creates a large, interior central space in the middle of the Hinge Block to be used year round and provide an identity for the area. The other approach (Scheme B) draws one into and through the site by a series of interconnected, overlapping spaces, some interior and some exterior. This approach is based on a reference to a medieval city layout, specifically that used in San Gimignano in Italy. The two residential and one office building occur in both schemes."

GROUND LEVEL PLAN

0 25 50 100

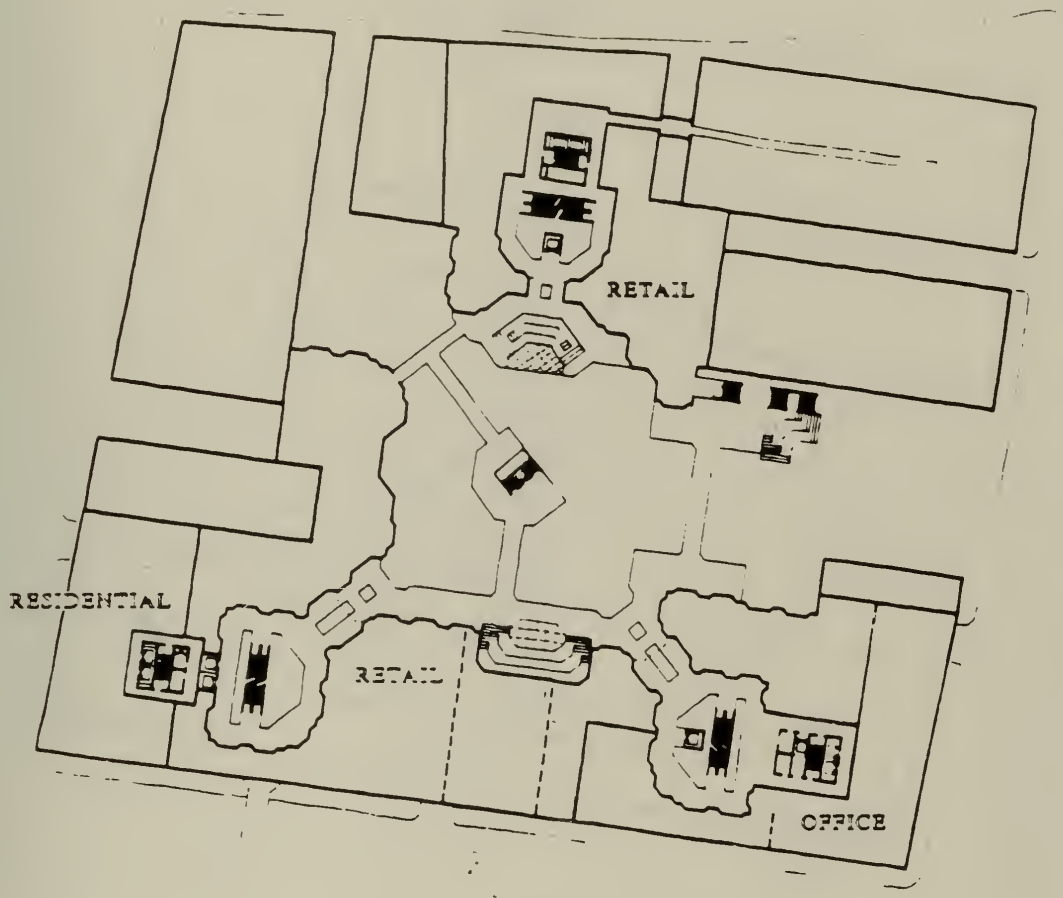
HINGE BLOCK SITE A



LEVEL TWO PLAN

0 25 50 100

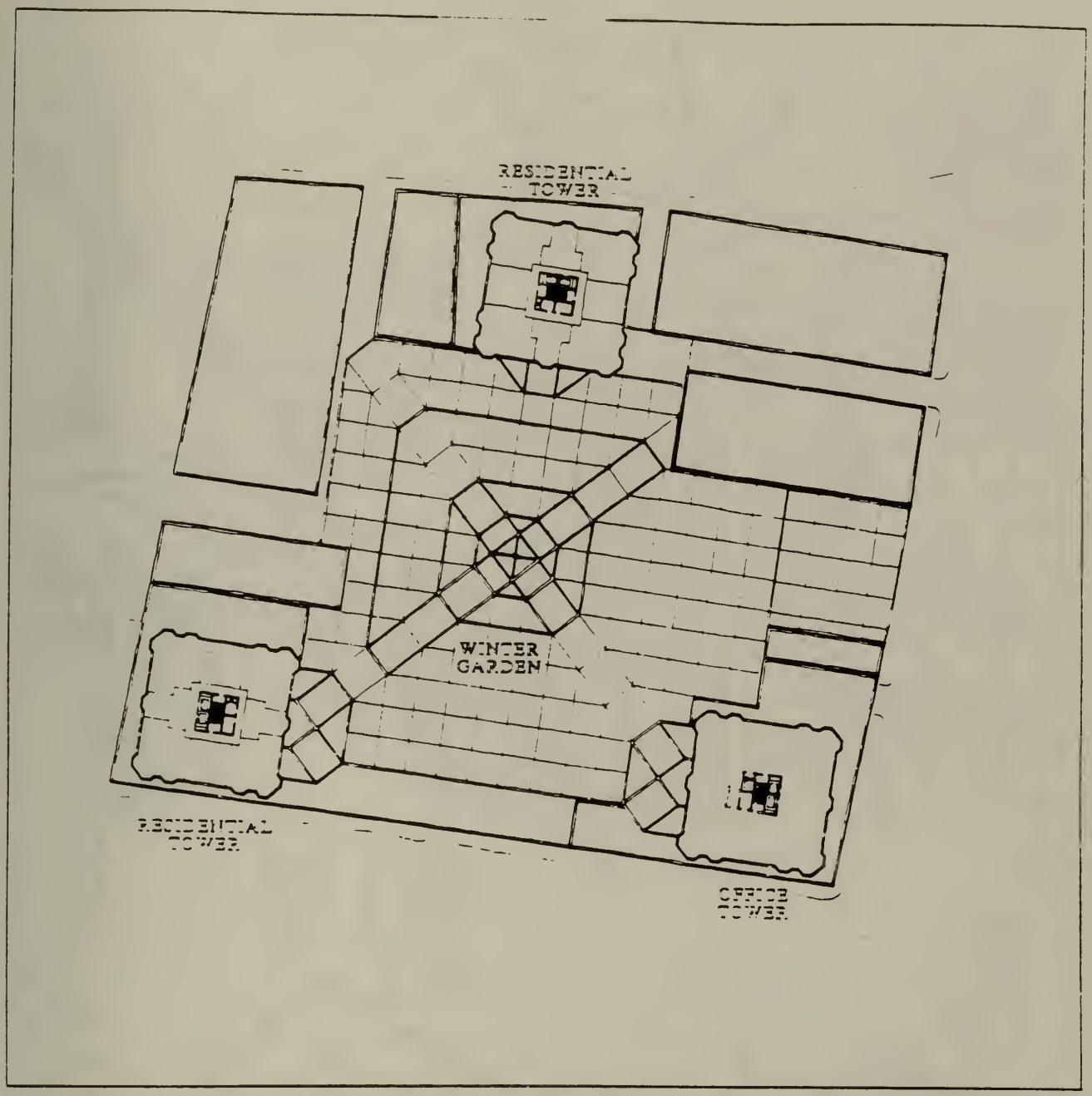
HINGE BLOCK SITE A



LEVEL THREE PLAN

0 25 50 100

HINGE BLOCK SITE A



ROOF PLAN

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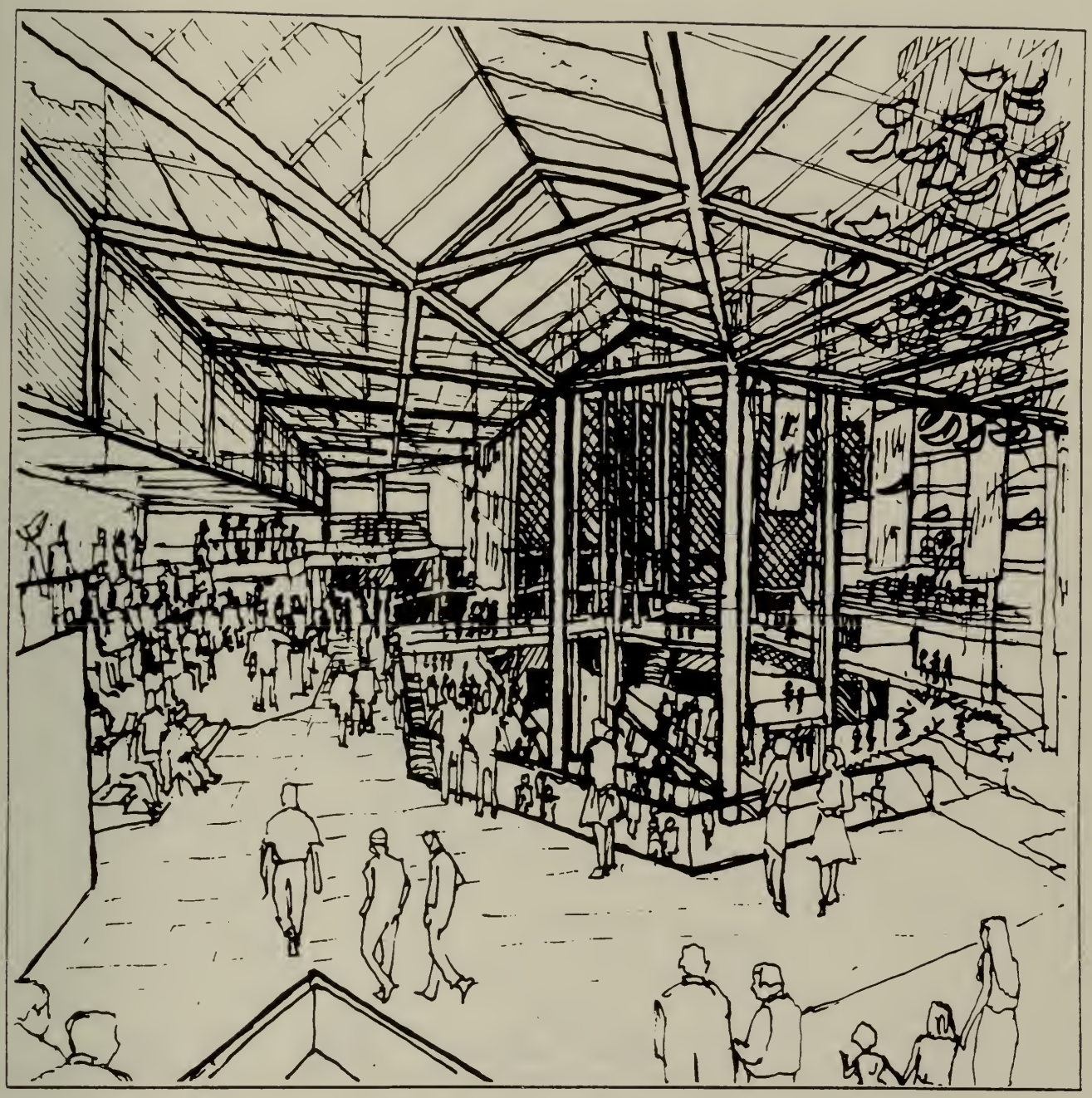
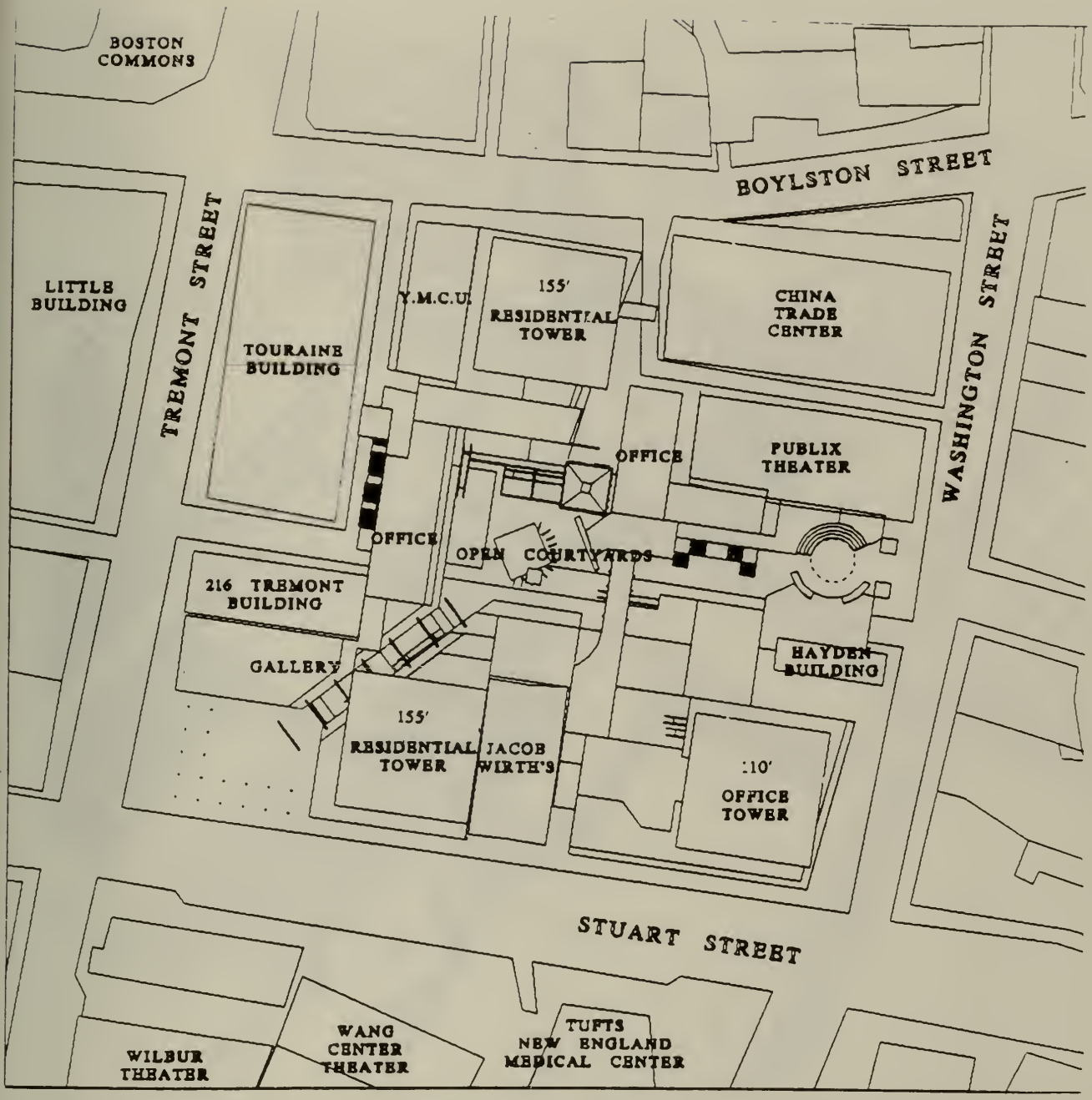
HINGE BLOCK SITE A



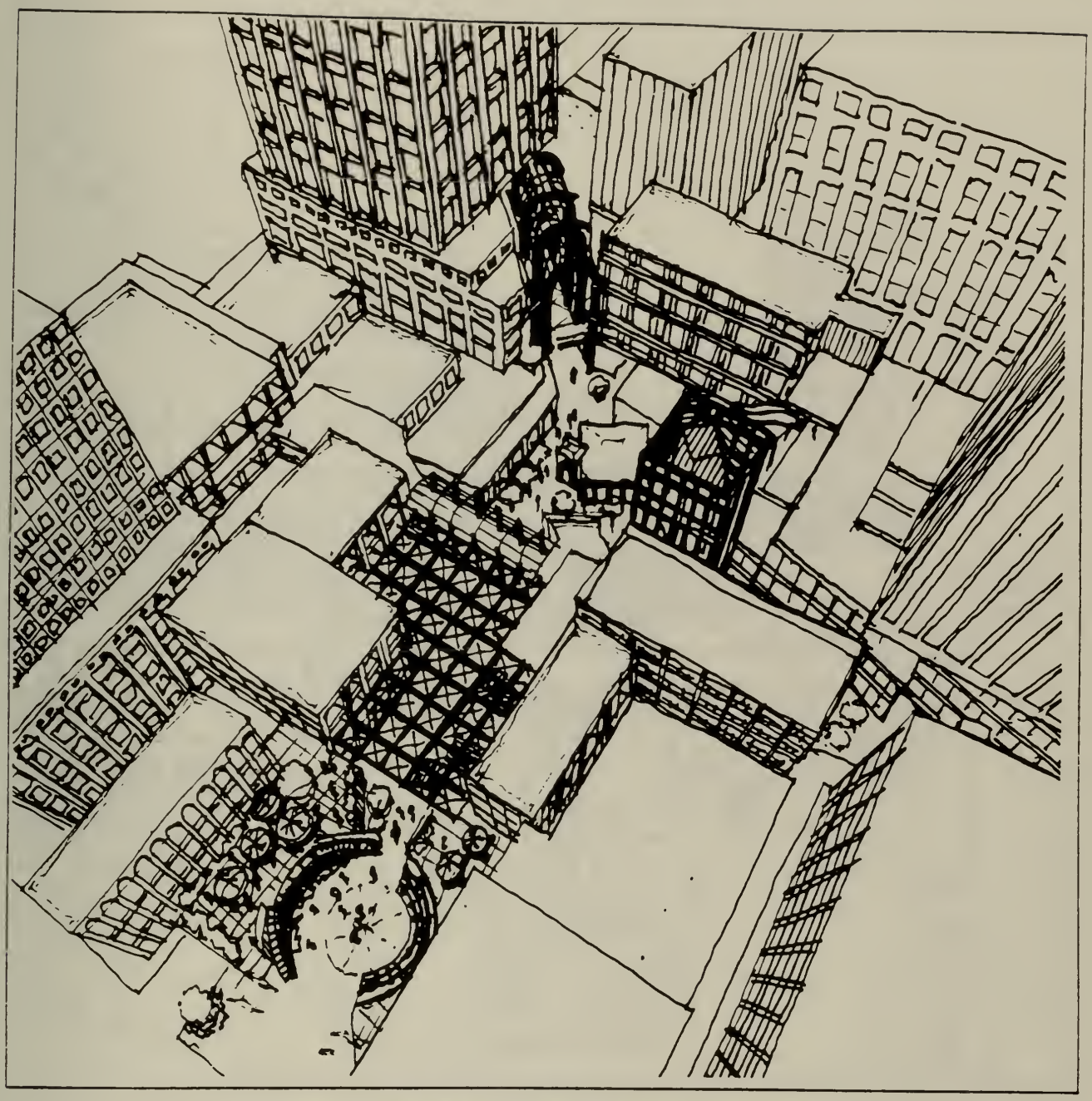
INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE

HINGE BLOCK SITE A

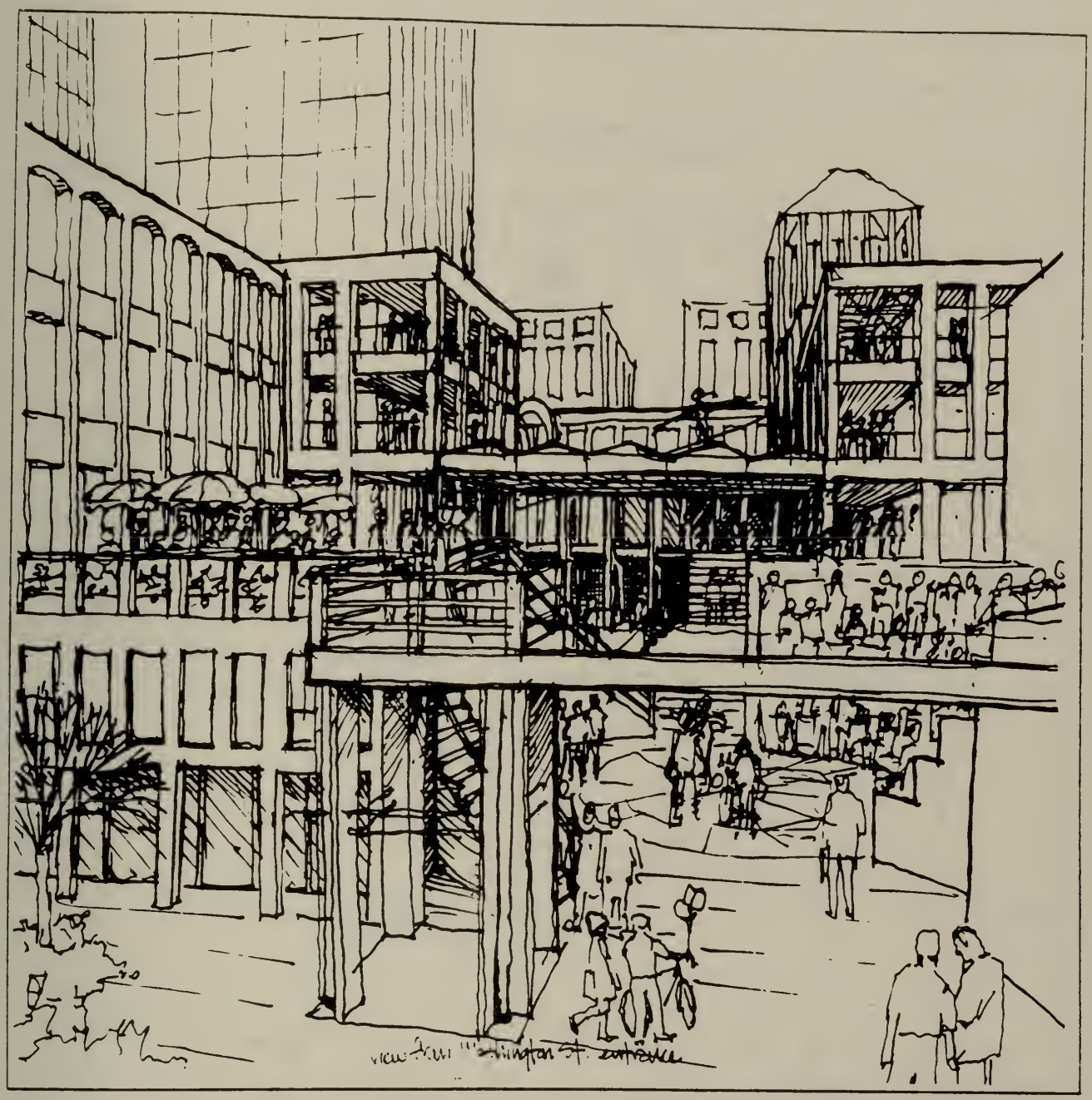


CONCEPTUAL PLAN

HINGE BLOCK SITE B

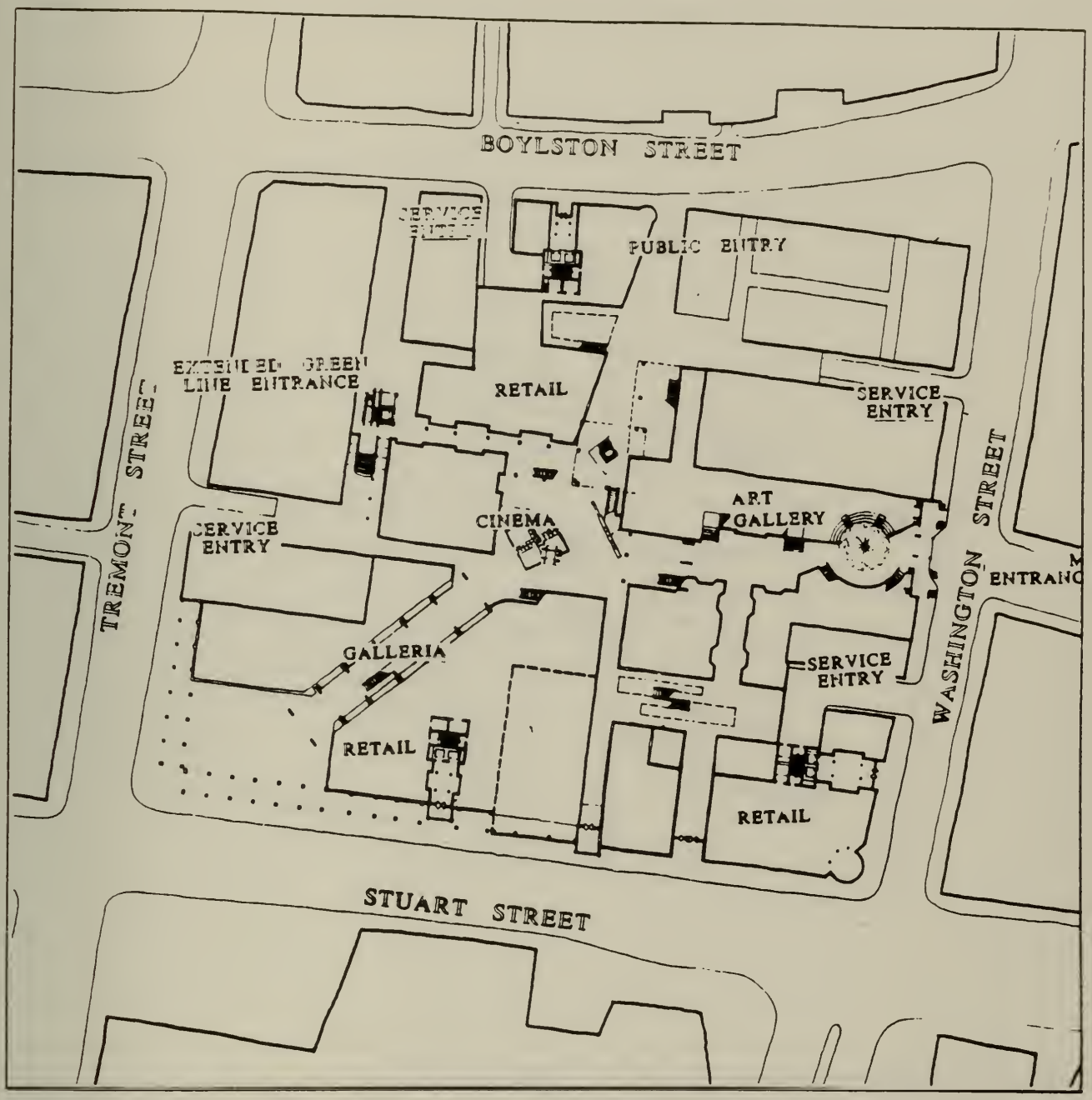


VIEW LOOKING INTO HINGE BLOCK



INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE

HINGE BLOCK SITE B



GROUND LEVEL PLAN

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HINGE BLOCK SITE B

LEVEL TWO PLAN

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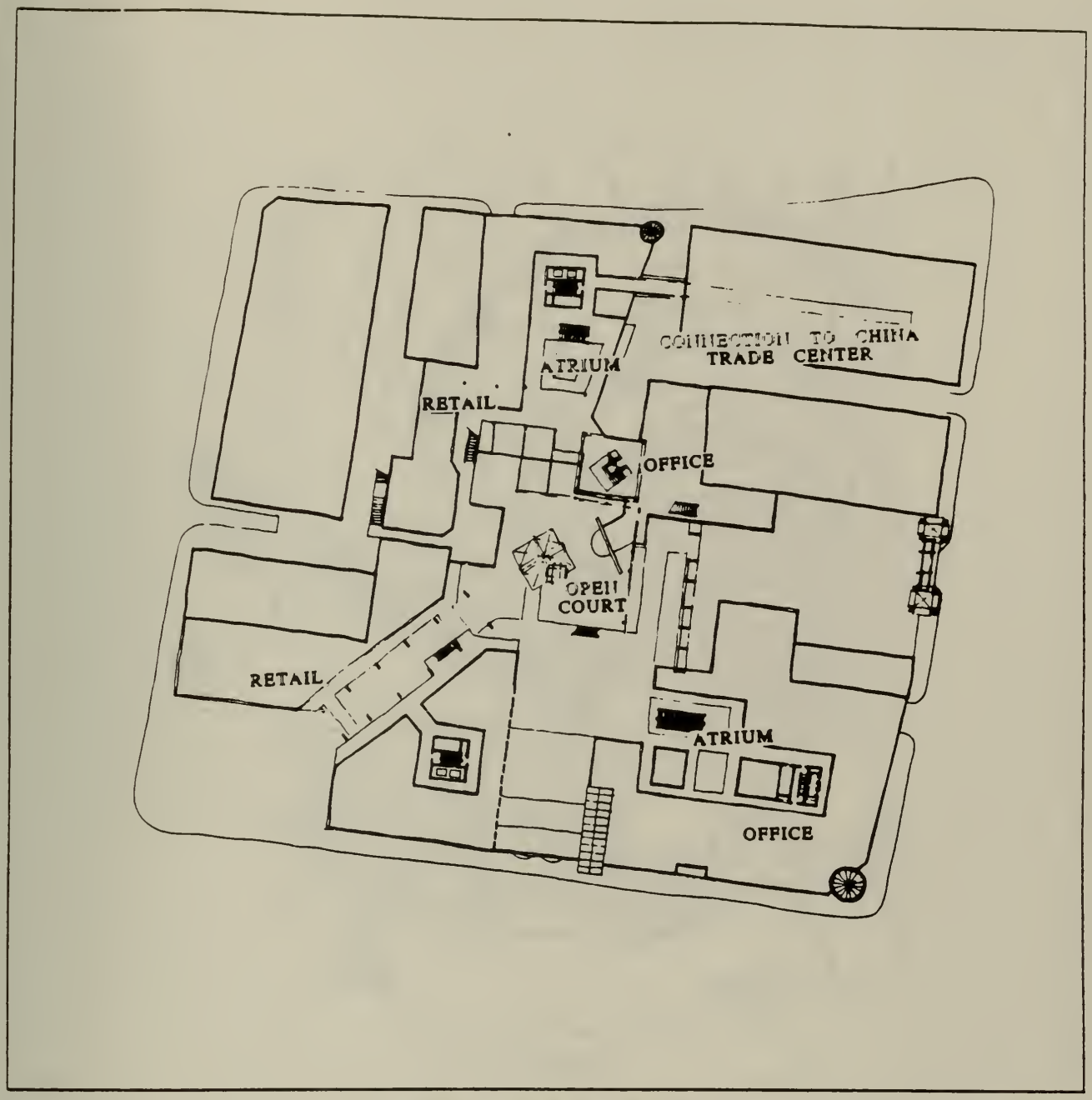
HINGE BLOCK SITE B



LEVEL THREE PLAN

0 25 50 100

HINGE BLOCK SITE B

INTERIOR PERSPECTIVE

HINGE BLOCK SITE B

PRELIMINARY FLOOR AREAS
SCHEME B

LEVEL	RETAIL	OFFICE	RESIDENTIAL
1	60.000		
2	45.675	10.750	
3	31.650	11.750	9.750
4	8.450	11.750	9.750
5		12.250	21.225
6		12.250	16.200
7		8.100	16.200
Towers		24.300	121.500
Total	145.775	91.150	194.625

* Areas are in square feet and are gross areas.

* Retail square footage includes following program elements:
satelite museums (2)
art gallery
200 seat cinema theater
impromptu performance spaces

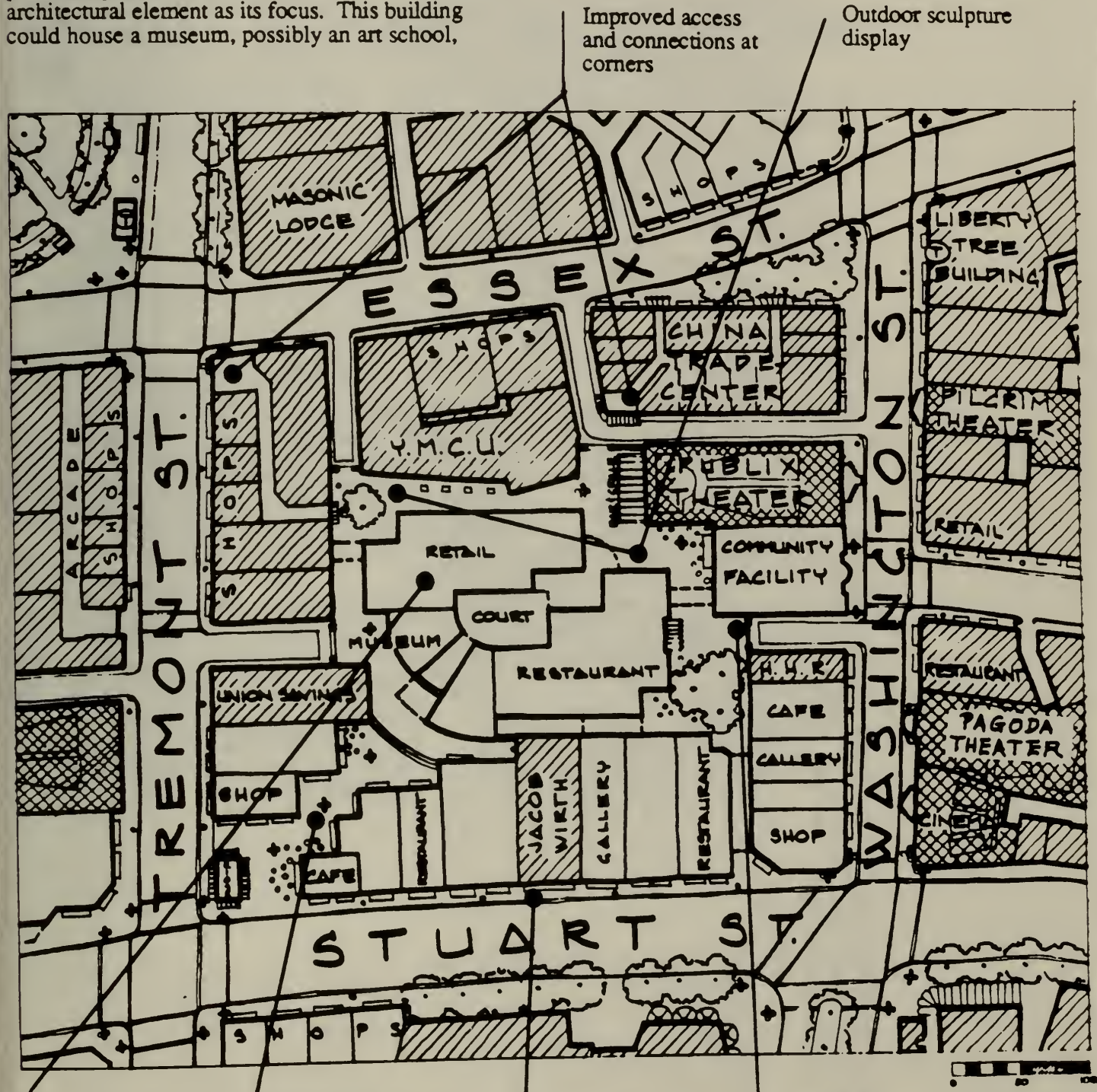
Benjamin Thompson Associates
Prepared for the BRA and the Cultural District Task Force
1988

Benjamin Thompson and Associates (BTA), the firm which designed the Faneuil Hall Market Place and numerous similar projects all over the country, was hired by the city to prepare a public space program for the new Cultural District, an area the firm had previously studied in 1978. Included in those studies was a planned new public space area on the Hinge Block.

According to Thompson: "The 'Hinge Block,' ... is the geographical and functional center of the new Cultural District. It has several historic buildings in it ... its surrounding structures are of low and medium height. At its center is a spacious area which lends itself to creation of a protected pedestrian place with a new architectural element as its focus. This building could house a museum, possibly an art school, as well as shops and offices, an outdoor sculpture-garden, and a cafe, all taking advantage of the light and warmth of its southern exposure."

Hinge Block: heart of the Cultural District.

The "Hinge Block," so named because its central location is in fact defined by the boundaries of four districts, is the geographical and functional heart of the new Cultural District. It has several historic buildings in it, including the H. H. Richardson Building on Washington, the Y.M.C Union on Essex, and Jacob Wirth restaurant on Stuart Street. Its surrounding structures are of low and medium height. At its center is a spacious area which lends itself to creation of a protected pedestrian place with a new architectural element as its focus. This building could house a museum, possibly an art school, as well as shops and offices, an outdoor sculpture garden, and a cafe, all taking advantage of the light and warmth of its southern exposure. The new building will be visible from the Stuart/Tremont intersection, and that corner will be redesigned to invite people to enter and walk through the block. On this edge of "Tremont Circus," a corner kiosk will attract pedestrians, and offer services supportive of the theater and nightlife activities nearby.



BEN THOMPSON ASSOCIATES

MIDTOWN AREA PLAN FOR THE PUBLIC REALM

KEY

The plan prepared by Benjamin Thompson Associates focuses on the realization of a vision for an identifiable character for the district. The study calls for the creation of focal points and public plazas and makes recommendations for streetscape improvements. It is anticipated that between $19 and $20 million will be required to fund the proposed streetscape improvements for the midtown area.

Avenue de Lafayette at Washington: "Opera House Square", a district within a district.
Give special treatment to the stretch of Washington Street in front of the Paramount Theater, Opera House, and Modern Theater. Redesign Lafayette Place to add an entrance at the corner, shops, and pedestrian activity along the street edges.

Boston Common: extending the beauty of greenery and the liveliness of public events into the Cultural District.
Make the southern edge of Boston Common an outdoor extension of the Cultural District. Create a well defined oval at the corner with a central area for street theater and urban festivities. Add an outdoor cafe in the former Deer Park building and yard.

Essex at Washington: Liberty Square comes alive again.
Reactivate the Liberty Tree Corner through redesign of the small park for outdoor cultural events, active uses in the 600 Washington Street and Liberty Tree buildings, and through placement of a major entry space leading to a through block arcade at the corner of Parcel 30.

Hinge Block: heart of the Cultural District
As part of the Visual Arts Center, in the middle of the Hinge Block, create a protected pedestrian place with a new architectural element as the focus.

Stuart at Tremont: "Tremont Circus", crossroads of the Cultural District
Articulate the Tremont/Stuart intersection as "Tremont Circus" with dramatic lighting and unique paving. Create a gathering space at the corner of Parcel C 4 with connections through to a pedestrianized Warrenton Street.

Stuart at Washington: a true edge to the Cultural District where it meets Chinatown
Orient new development along lower Washington Street to Chinatown. Give special attention to the terminus of the view up Beach Street.

Street Lighting Plan

Street Lighting Plan for the Midtown Cultural District by
Benjamin Thompson Associates

Chinatown 2000
MIT Urban Design Studio
Prepared for the Chinatown/South Cove Neighborhood Council
1988

This report, prepared by an MIT urban design studio for the Chinatown/South Cove Neighborhood Council, examined the Hinge Block's potential to meet some of Chinatown's pressing needs. The report recommended mixed-use developments on the Hinge Block with facilities to serve the Chinatown community in renovated and appropriately-scaled new buildings. The block and surrounding streets, the report noted, "are crucial to the Chinatown community. The development sites are situated in highly visible areas adjacent to core Chinatown and can anchor Chinatown's presence in the City of Boston. The sites offer a wealth of opportunity for physical and economic expansion of this community and they are prime sites for commercial, cultural, social service, and non-profit facilities for limited housing." All of these services are badly needed in Chinatown, notes the report, which adds that "because of the scarcity of land in Chinatown, the opportunities for expansion are limited. The current conditions of the Hinge Block and lower Washington Street offer the best opportunities for growth in the area."

The report suggests that "rehabilitating the buildings in this area instead of erecting large towers would restore the original character of the neighborhood" and adds that the area needs better pedestrian amenities. The report goes on to suggest a mix of uses, emphasizing ground-level retail uses, second-level cultural uses, and upper floor housing and office uses.

After examining a number of development scenarios for the Hinge Block site, the report recommends a three-stage development program for the block. The first portion, along lower Washington and Stuart Streets "should adopt a scale consistent with the existing streetscape shaped by the presence of numerous historical buildings," the report says. " ... Through the renovation and rehabilitation of existing vacant structures, the Asian community can request that services and cultural activities be integrated into those historical buildings. ... Space for basic needs, services (such as a job data bank, or an information center, media arts center), retail space for grocery stores, laundry facilities, bookstores, and restaurants would be located primarily on the ground floor. Second and third floors would be targeted for service organizations and cultural activities. This expansion could address the objective of linking Chinatown to the downtown commercial area. ... At least 10 percent of the development should be reserved for a minority development partner from the Chinatown community."

The second portion of the site, located between Tremont, Stuart, and LaGrange Streets, "could be developed on a scale that does not impact the neighborhood negatively," the report adds. "This site could accommodate an Asian cultural center as well as commercial and retail facilities. ... In this development a cultural center would serve as a gathering ground for the various cultural organizations and individual artists in the community. ... Programming should focus on the performing arts with a 400-seat theater, a visual arts center, an Asian-American museum of history, and a lobby with related commercial spaces. ... This facility could be subsidized by the linkage program with 10 percent of the jobs on the site reserved for Chinatown and/or the site could be developed in partnership with a minority developer."

The third part of the site is land between Boylston and LaGrange Street on property primarily owned by the YMCU. This area "is suitable for mixed

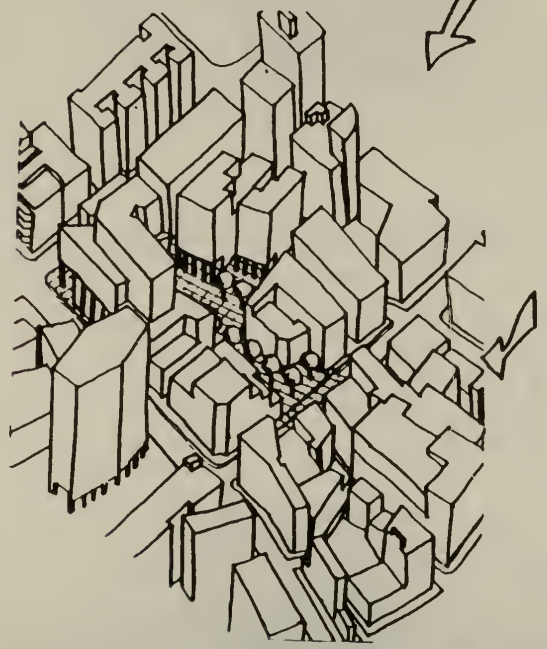
commercial use and housing. Here negotiations could be made with developers for linkage funds for at least 25 percent of the units to be reserved for low- and moderate-income housing."

The report further notes that "the creation of open spaces through the Hinge Block could articulate the different development projects. For example, a square on Washington Street in front of Beach Street could be oriented towards the community, and a central commercial and cultural place could be located on the corner of Stuart and Tremont Streets."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ask for the federation of Chinatown culture by creating an Asian Cultural Center. Address the cultural diversity of Chinatown and promote the vitality of Chinatown at the city scale.

Ask for a linkage of Chinatown to downtown area by improving pedestrian access through public amenities such as street and crossing improvements.



Ask for articulations of Chinatown to Cultral District by creation of public open spaces such as recreational, gathering spaces.

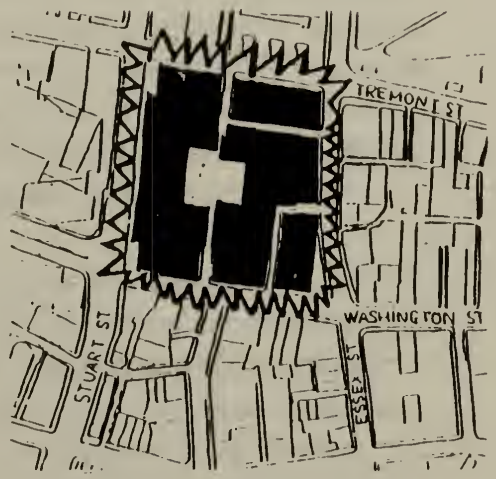
Ask for diversification of Chinatown economic presence by means of commercial services/ cultural facilities on the lower floor of any development.

Ask for an integration of Chinatown to downtown by continuity of the physical characters such as rehabilitation of historic buildings consistent with the existing scale of the lower Washington Street.

There exists the potential for at least three patterns of development for the Hinge Block and lower Washington Street: one large development by one owner; several small developments by several owners; or three developments by several owners. The advantages and disadvantages of each type are outlined in the following maps and charts:

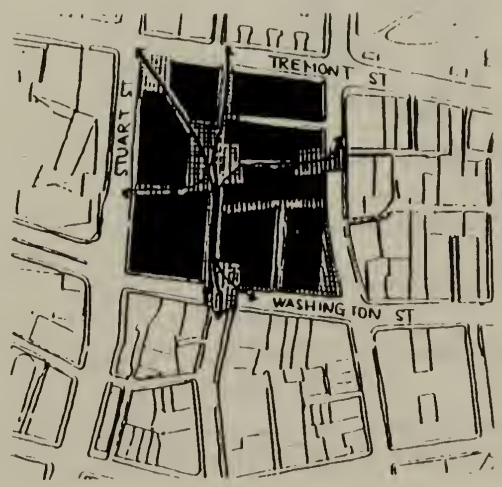
Senario 2

SEVERAL DEVELOPMENTS



Senario 1

ONE DEVELOPMENT



Senario 3

THREE DEVELOPMENTS

PROPOSAL FOR THE HINGE BLOCK

This proposal suggests requests that could be made by the Chinatown community for facilities to achieve a gradual connection to the rest of the Boston community. There are three sites on the Hinge Block that can achieve these goals.

The FIRST PORTION of the block is located on the lower part of Washington Street between Stuart and Washington Streets. A development in this area should adopt a scale consistent with the existing streetscape shaped by the presence of numerous historical buildings. This part of the development is characterized by a mix of new features and the rehabilitation of vacant buildings.

Through the renovation and rehabilitation of existing vacant structures, the Asian community can request that services and cultural activities be integrated in those historical vacant buildings (i.e. the Richardson

SCENARIO OF DEVELOPMENT IN THREE PARTS

1 High density development

2 Low density development with preservasion of historic feature

3 Medium density development around YMCU historic building

Use of open spaces to link Chinatown to different parts of development

articulate the different development projects. A variety of spaces could be created. For example, a square on Washington Street in front of Beach Street could be oriented towards the community, and a central commercial and cultural place could be located on the corner of Stuart and Tremont Streets.

LOWER FLOOR DIAGRAM

Expansion of commercial and uses that have Chinatown business

Existing commercial use

Open Spaces

a. Recreational and gathering spaces for Chinatown

b. Commercial plaza

c. Public and lobby space for cultural facilities

Creation of mixed use; cultural/ services/commercial spaces for Chinatown

1. Job Infromation Center in Richardson Building
2. Media Center In Public Theater
3. New Asian Cultural Center
4. Reharsal Studio In Liberty Tree Building
5. Rehabilitation of Essex Theater

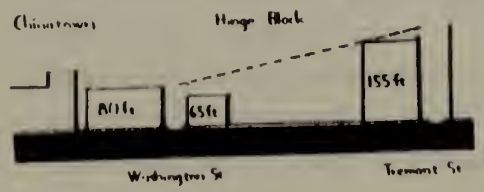
HISTORIC BUILDINGS

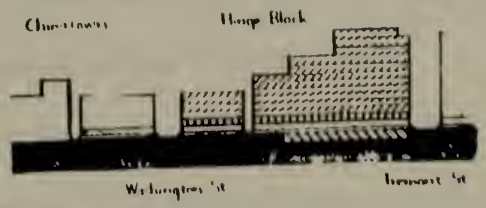
- Buildings classified in Category II by Boston Landmark
- Commission Buildings classified in Category III by Boston Landmark
- Buildings creating a streetscape on La Grange Street
- Streetscape created by historic feature on Washington St.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

- Circulation to improve
- New circulation spaces to create

- Commercial and retail uses to expand from Chinatown to Downtown
- Creation of network of cultural services
- Existing facilities
- New facilities in vacant buildings
- Creation of new buildings





three large office towers to be situated between Tremont, Washington and Boylston streets. They will house a variety of commercial, retail and cultural activities.

The New England Medical Center and the Institute of Contemporary Art have proposed a 20 story office tower for the site on the corner of Tremont and Stuart Streets. This development will provide facilities for both institutions as well as space for commercial activities.

Lower Washington Street: Currently the activities along lower Washington Street and its deteriorating buildings present a visual and pychological barrier to Chinatown. In addition, the presence of the pornography industry in this area provides no economic benefits to the community. These conditions undermine what is potentially an excellent link betweeen the downtown commercial district of Boston and Chinatown.

CONECTIONS

To reinforce connection between Chinatown and downtown commercial area.

To create connection from Chinatown to Midtown Cultural District.

1 To create articulation between Beach, Washington and La Grance streets.

2 To create articulation between Chinatown, Hinge Block and Midtown Cultural District.

Parcel 31: The Hinge Block
Creating a Focal Development for the Midtown Cultural District
Work in Progress
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce/Center City Task Force
1988

In the midst of planning for the Midtown Cultural District Plan, another vision for the Hinge Block was put forward as a work in progress by the Center City Task Force, a group organized by the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce that included downtown business, institutional, and community leaders as well as members of Chinatown and other neighborhood groups.

The study outlined a number of goals and objectives for the site, including, reintegrating the parcel back into the core, encouraging a mix of uses including housing, developing the site as a Midtown Cultural District signature development, creating a cultural center which would include entertainment and visual arts uses, and creating a "buffer zone" with Chinatown that includes Asian-owned commercial and retail space. In addition the task force emphasized that the proposed development had to be economically feasible and that it occur within the next five-to-seven years.

The task force's development program for the site included 800,000-1,000,000 square feet of new mixed-use development on the site. Uses considered for the site included commercial/office, retail, residential, entertainment, cultural, and parking. A hotel was not considered for the site because other hotels are being considered on nearby sites. The plan preserved historic buildings, created significant open space, and a new facility for the YMCU.

The conceptual plan for the site called for 500,000-800,000 square feet of office space in a higher-rise (26-28 story) building at the center of the site. About 150-to-200 units of housing would be built either on the Boylston Street side of the project or in the higher-rise element at the center of the site. New arts facilities could include one-to-three performance theaters, one cooperative gallery, six commercial galleries, one cinema complex, two-to-four restaurants, and two or three nightclubs. A central entertainment "bulletin board" and ticketing center could also be located in public areas on the site. The proposed complex might also include 4-to-12 retail shops or kiosks as well as service-retail facilities.

The plan calls for small outdoor seating areas on Washington Street across from Beach Street where they could serve as a connector to Chinatown. A large outdoor gathering spot could be built on the corner of Stuart and Tremont Streets and an indoor courtyard or atrium would be part of the new larger building.

The report further notes that "due to the close proximity of the hinge block to Chinatown, it is especially important that this community share in the benefits of parcel development." Specifically, the report proposes that the growth of the Chinatown business sector on Washington and Essex Street be encouraged. The report says that development on the Hinge Block could attract new Asian investment to the city; provide affordable retail and commercial space which is accessible to the Asian community; enhance community access to employment opportunities; and diversify the Chinatown economy by providing, as feasible, business incubator space for new enterprises.

The plan includes an economic analysis which asserts that the larger-scale mixed development is necessary because "in this pioneering area, the ability of a project to generate a critical mass of activity and create a powerful image of its

own that will increase the likelihood that it can overcome, rather than be engulfed by the area's prevailing negative image." The plan further notes that there "is a need for a strong public sector role in economic development" in the area. The report adds that "the city currently or potentially has at its disposal a variety of means by which it can enhance the economic value of and/or provide subsidy to potential development projects and thereby, facilitate their development in as timely as fashion as possible."

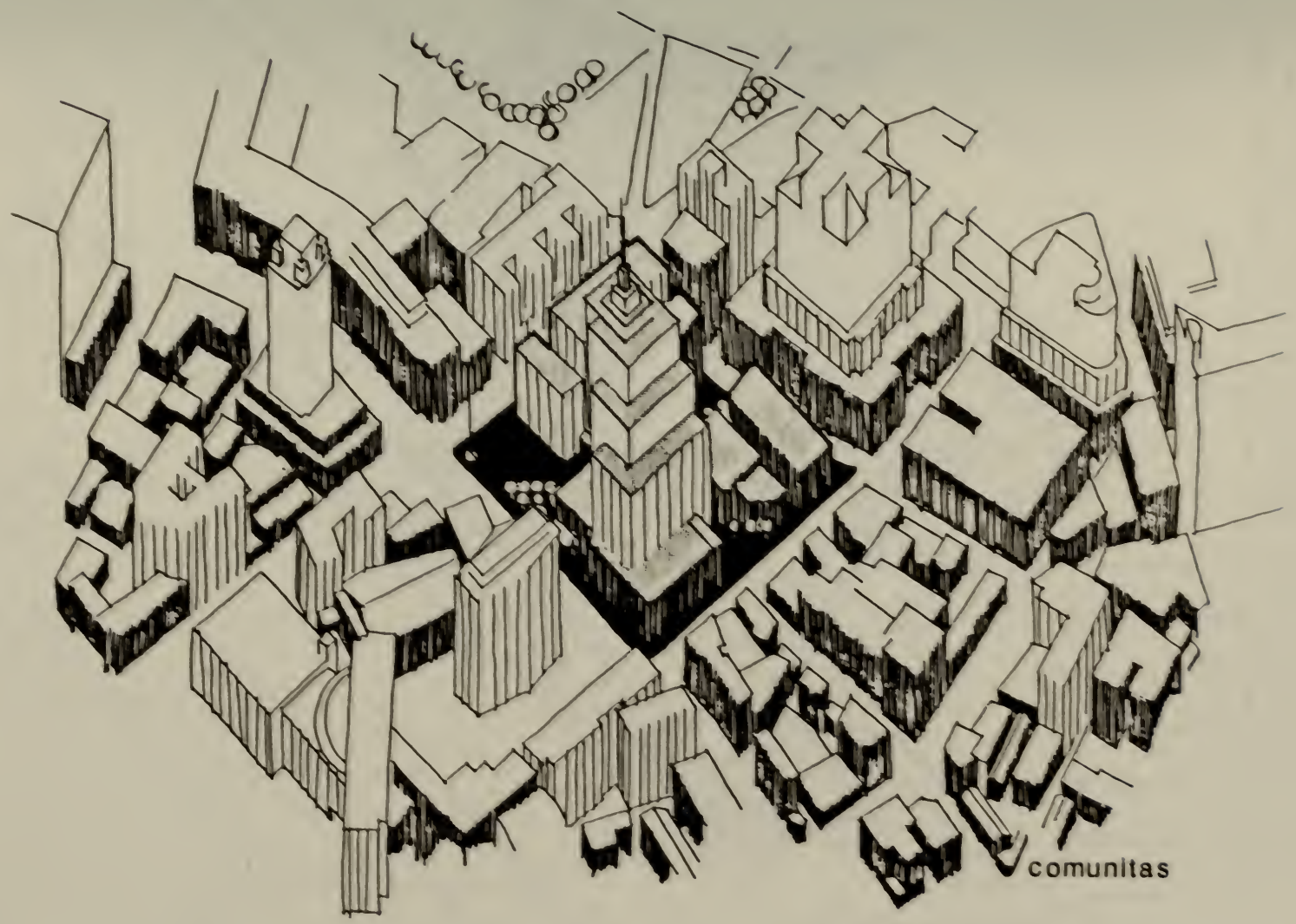
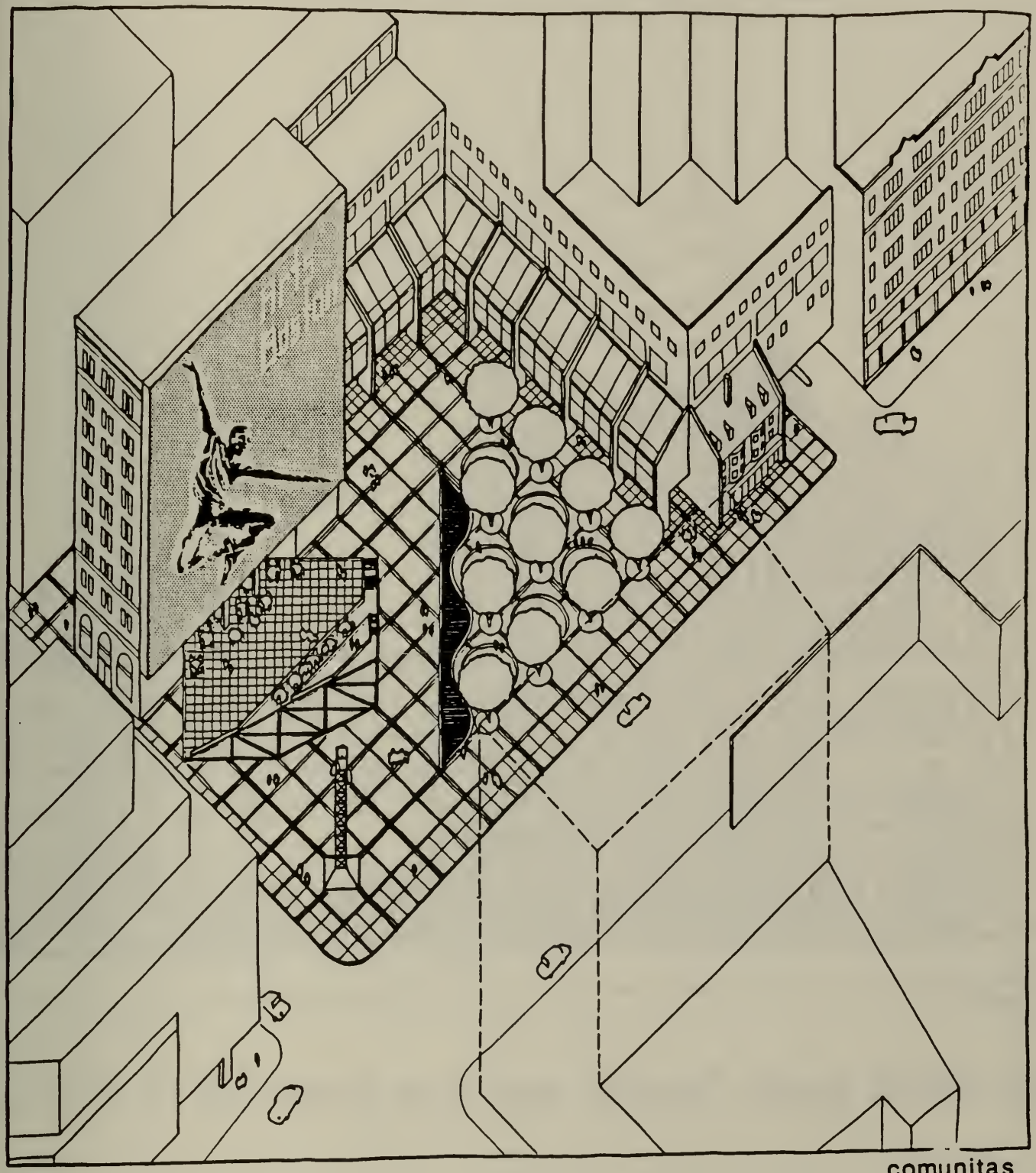


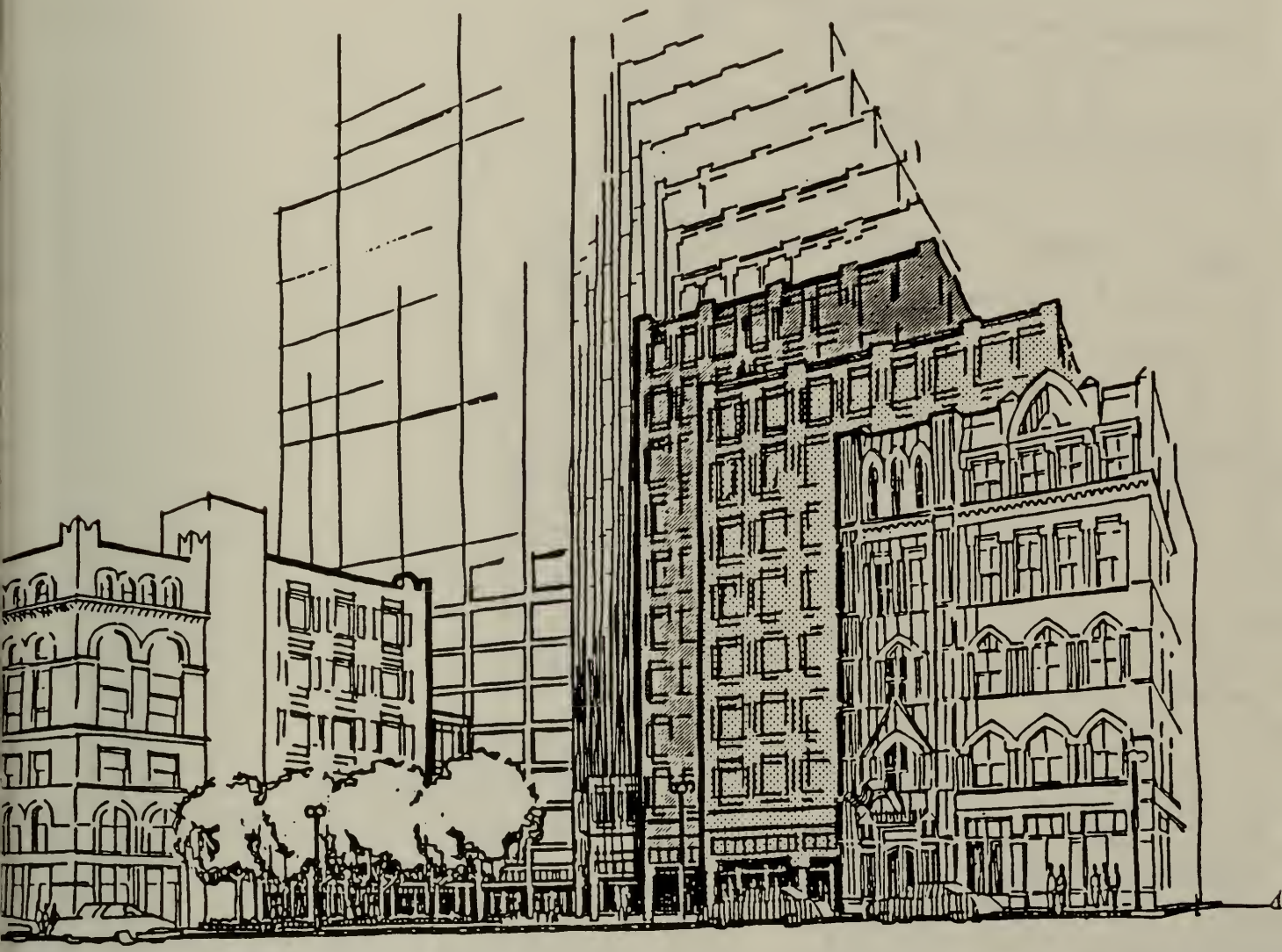
Illustration of a new, mixed-use integrated development for Parcel 31 showing buildings to be preserved, creation of 3 open space areas and higher-rise element with setbacks and "landmark light".

"MIDTOWN PLAZA" Right side of plaza is tree-lined seating and eating area, area of quieter repose; left side of plaza shows high-tech display of event on side of Union Warren building and could incorporate performance area, area of higher intensity of use. A water feature divides the two sides of the plaza and its uses.



comunitas

June, 1988
WORK IN PROGRESS



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he YMCU Building and new "place" along Essex St.

(Boylston Building on left, public plaza at center with development set back from street, YMCU building at right)

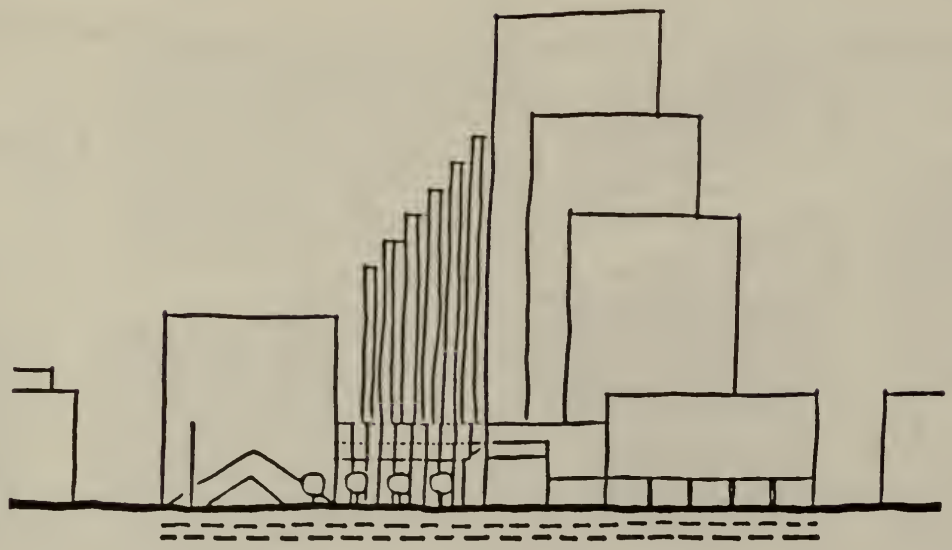
CENTER CITY TASK FORCE, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
Creating a Vision for Parcel 31, the Hinge Block

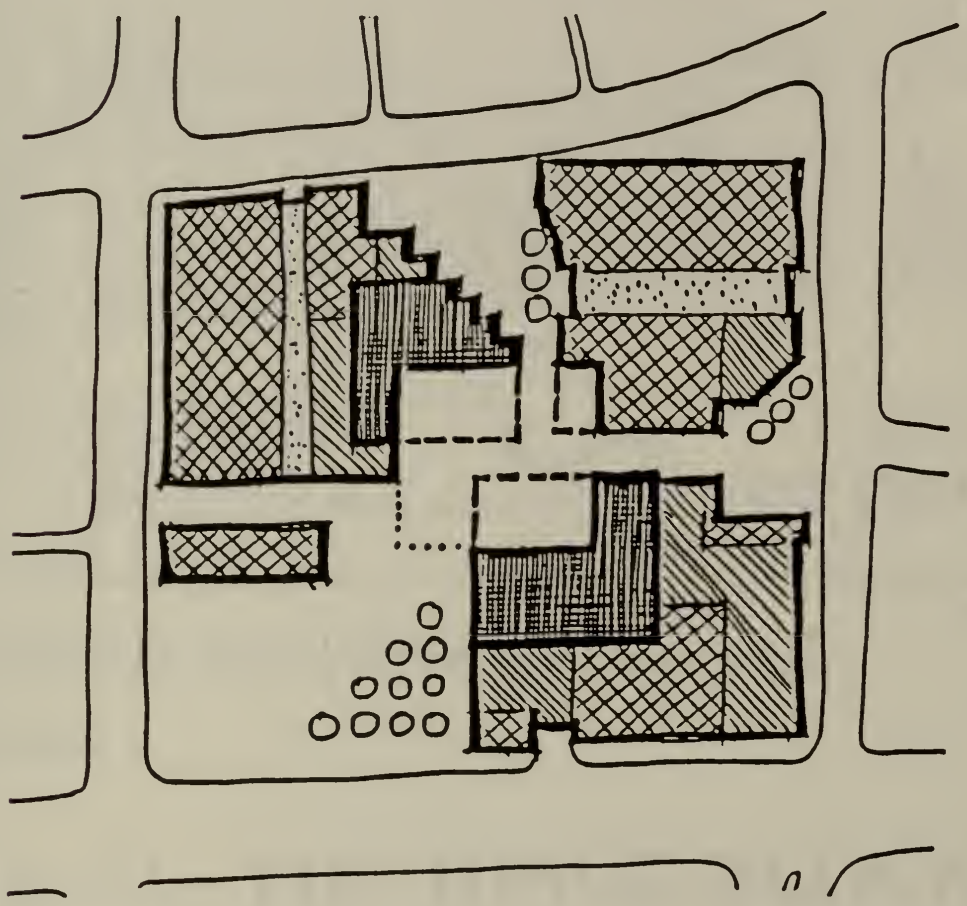
June, 1988
WORK IN PROGRESS

(Small plaza between Hayden Building and Boylston Building at one entrance to a new integrated, mixed-use development. Provides view down Washington Street to the Hayden Buidling as an important landmark, and provides connection to Beach Street terminus and Chinatown.

Washington St. looking toward the Hayden Building

CENTER CITY TASK FORCE, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce June, 1988
WORK IN PROGRESS
Creating a Vision for Parcel 31





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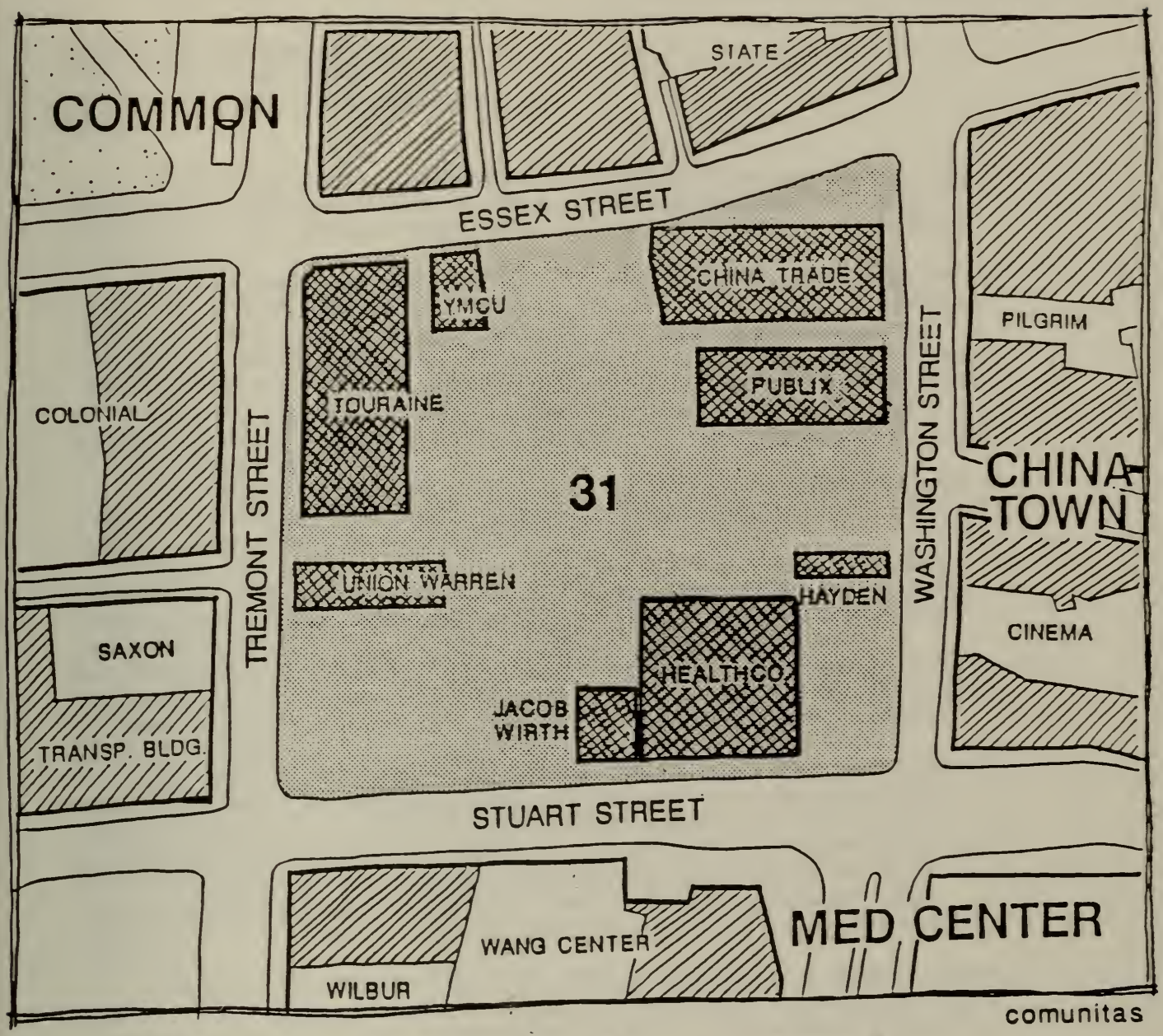
FOCAL DEVELOPMENT

CENTER CITY TASK FORCE, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce June, 1988
DEFINING A VISION FOR PARCEL 31, the hinge block
WORK IN PROGRESS



An opportunity for redevelopment and restoration...

PARCEL 31 - THE HINGE BLOCK..

(Showing buildings to be retained as part of parcel revitalization)

Midtown Cultural District Plan
Framework for Discussion
BRA and the Office of Arts and Humanities
1988

The Midtown Cultural District Plan also identifies the Hinge Block as a key parcel in the revitalization of Boston's historic entertainment district. However, the plan proposes a different vision for the site than many of the previous plans for the block.

The plan "follows an approach that is the direct opposite of the direction taken by downtown urban renewal plans for the last three decades. The Midtown plan is incremental, relying on multiple projects and development teams, and building upon what already exists and what should be preserved and enhanced. The plan does not try to rejuvenate the area by providing massive public subsidies for an oversized project at the center. Instead the plan tries to revitalize the Midtown area by extending the strong existing uses at the district's edges towards its underutilized center."

According to the plan: "New development of the block should be low-rise, in scale with the nearby Chinatown neighborhood and should be incrementally built so that rapid change does not overwhelm the fabric of the area."

The report continues: "The block will house a variety of uses that reflect the different character of the areas that surround it. New facilities on the block should include a major public area, public space for the performing arts, visual arts facilities, affordable housing and commercial facilities for the Asian community, and other retail and restaurant uses that serve both Chinatown and the Cultural District. Some ground floor uses should be oriented to the creation of a Visual Arts Center which will include a set of arts facilities interconnected by shop- and cafe-lined walkways surrounding the major public space.

The development program for the block should also create opportunities for equity participation by minority business enterprises and should preserve and restore the block's many historic buildings, which include H.H. Richardson's Hayden Building and the YMCU Building. The development program should also study the feasibility of reopening the closed Orange Line in the center of the block as well as building an underground parking facility on the block. City owned-land in the Hinge Block can be used to leverage many of these benefits and uses."

This approach, the plan notes, "offers Boston the chance to fashion a new model for major urban redevelopment, based on incremental reinvestment, not overwhelming mega-projects; preservation of history, not demolition of historic structures; and the participation of the community, not its displacement."

CULTURAL FACILITIES

The arts community has identified needed theate and galleries to be shared by non profit groups. The n shows preferred potential locations for these facilities.

The City is working with artists, community group and property owners to locate the needed facilities wit the Cultural District.

Vacant Buildings Proposed for Renovation

A	Saxon/Majestic	for 799 + seat proscenium th
B	Publix/Gaiety	for Asian performing arts cen
C.	Essex Theater	replaced with 199 seat exper theater
D	Paramount Theater	for 499 seat dance theater
E	Modern Theater	for 400 seat concert hall
F	Steinert Hall	for 200 seat concert hall
G	Liberty Tree Halls	for studio/rehearsal space
H	Former Chauncy Street Power Station	for studio/rehearsal space

New Facilities Proposed as Part of New Construction

a	Parcel C-4	one 250 seat performance art and four 2,000 sq ft member galleries
b	Hinge Block	199 seat theater, Visual Arts C with several visual arts exhibit spaces, galleries, experimenta film/video cinema, art gallerie major public space
c	Parcel 30	499 seat flex-space theater in c a replacement for the State Th
d	Hayward Place Site	199 seat dance theater and 19 experimental theater
e	Former Gary Theater	additional backstage space for Saxon/Majestic and shop, stor studio/reheersal, and arts offic
f	Parcel P-7/Wilbur Theater	potentiel new home of the Insti of Contemporary Art
g	Park Squere Project	commercial galleries
h	Other Potential Sites	new cultural facilities

Potential sites for new performance and visual arts facilities

Potentiel public spaces for art installations, public performances, sitting areas, and sidewalk sales

BOSTON DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MIDTOWN CULTURAL PLAN

CITY OF BOSTON, OFFICE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

CULTURAL DISTRICT CONCEPTUAL PLAN

Boston has the highest concentration of historic theaters of any American city outside of New York. In addition to its active theaters, Midtown's vacant theaters and development sites offer the opportunity to add a cluster of small new cultural facilities which will be accessible and affordable. Combined with restaurants, shops open into the evening, night clubs, cabarets, sidewalk cafes and public art, they will transform the historic theater district into a multi-faceted Cultural District.

- Theater Boulevards - segments of main streets with major theaters, like "A Great White Way" in character
- Theater Alleys - small pedestrian ways with small and experimental theaters and nightclubs, like "off Broadway" in character
- New through block connectors
- Existing active theaters
- Vacant theaters - worthy of preservation
- Vacant theaters - substantially altered
- Anticipated development sites
- Potential sites for new performance and visual arts facilities
- Potential public spaces for art installations, public performances, sitting areas, and sidewalk cafes
- Expansion of Chinatown to Washington Street

THEATER BOULEVARD
THEATER ALLEY
VISUAL ARTS CENTER
CULTURAL FACILITIES

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MIDTOWN CULTURAL PLAN

CITY OF BOSTON, OFFICE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Cultural District Model / Benjamin Thompson Associates

A promenade
District, conc
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Boston Comm
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Cultural District
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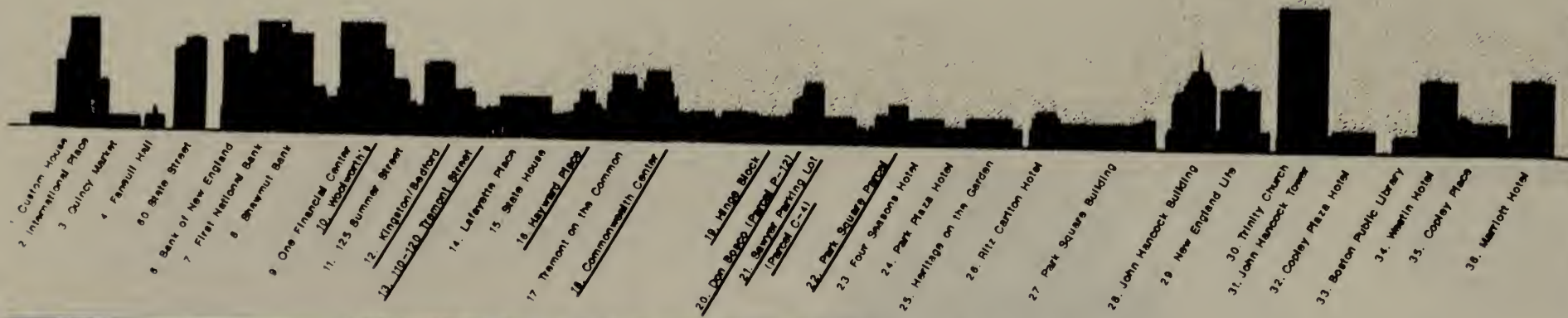


ed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

The High Spine Concept, Circa 1961

In 1961, urban planner Kevin Lynch made a sketch of the "High S cept, an idea for channeling the expansion of the downtown into a band around the southerly perimeter of the Back Bay. Later that Architect's Plan for Boston, the Boston Society of Architect's Co Civic Design developed Lynch's idea and initiated one of the first incorporate the tall building into a city planning framework, by pr wall of towers from the Financial District down Boylston Street to sachusetts Avenue. A quarter of a century later, this nearly tra enterprise anticipated what has become a major physical chara Boston that inadvertently re-establishes in a new way the shape o original peninsula.*

BRA Skyline Concept, 1988

Today's urban design concept put forth by the BRA is a less literal more environmentally sound alternative to the original "High S cept. Within the Midtown District this approach identifies the three clusters of smaller towers, separated by sufficient air and visually tie together the City's skyline without creating a continu penetrable wall of high rise buildings. The primary cluster, cen cated within the district, is the Commonwealth Center proposal development visually connects the larger office tower groupings in Financial District with the commercial Back Bay. Smaller cluster Upper Tremont (adjacent to Downtown Crossing) and Lower T (near Park Square) provide the necessary massing transition b ing and proposed high rise developments and the traditional, tures within the district. This clustering concept preserves the pedestrian environment, provides the residential neighborhoods area with a link to Boston Common, and guards against adverse ment impacts to the area.

* Alex Krieger and Lisa Green, Past Futures, Two Centuries of Boston, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, 1985

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MIDTOWN CULTURAL PLAN

CITY OF BOSTON, OFFICE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is the measure of building

PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHTS AND FARs

Key

125 155' Building Height/FAR 8- 10*

65' Building Height/FAR 4 Bay Village Edge

Boston Common/Public Garden Protection Zone

Within one hundred feet of Tremont Street and Boylston Street, the maximum building heights for new development will be as indicated, and the floor area ratio (FAR) will be 8– 10

Planned Development Areas

Development within the Planned Development Areas can proceed only in accord with the master plan for the area, and only after a specific development plan has been approved by the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Zoning Commission. The plan prescribes the uses, massing, height, location, and pearance of the buildings. The sizes of the building in the Planned Development Areas are set out in the table below. The Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, in the case Manning vs. Boston Redevelopment Authority, confirmed that "the PDA process [is intended to establish a more flexible zoning law and encourage large scale private development while in ing good design by improving planning and design controls."

MIDTOWN CULTURAL DISTRICT MASTER PLAN FO
PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AREAS
MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT AND FAR*

	PDA Height/ FAR Standards
MPDA-1	
Blocks 1, 2, 3, & 6	155'/10
Blocks 4,5, & 7	155 235'/10-12
MPDA-II	
Blocks 1, 2, & 3	250'-350'/12-14
Blocks 4, 5, 6, & 7	155'/10
Blocks 8	400'/14
Block 9	300'/14
MPDA-III	
Blocks 1, 4, & 6	155'-235'/10-12
Blocks 2, 3, & 5	155'/10

* Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, the maximu building height and FAR permitted within any Housing Priority Area is two hundred thirty-five (235) feet and an FAR of 12.

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

MIDTOWN CULTURAL PLAN

CITY OF BOSTON OFFICE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION BUILDING RATINGS AND NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS

KEY

Categories I, II, & III: Includes buildings rated as significant structures by the Boston Landmarks Commission. (See map of building ratings for further information.)

National Register Districts

1. **Piano Row**
Twenty-nine buildings around the corner of Tremont and Boylston Streets that include proper ties used for music-related industries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, nineteenth century residances on Boylston Place, turn-of-the-century commercial buildings; and important theaters

2. **Beach/Knapp**
Six buildings on two side streets between lower Washington Street and Harrison Avenue that reflect the historical development of the eree from residential to mixed commerciel and light in dustrial warehouse uses

3. **Liberty Tree**
Six mid-to-late ninateenth century buildings et the corner of Washington and Essex Streets The Liberty Tree Tavern and the Liberty Tree, where patriots gathered to protest British rule before the Revolutionary War, once stood in the aree

4. **Washington Street Theater**
Seven buildings built between the 1870s and 1930s which were the site of the city's most concentrated theater activity The district, which is where vaudeville wes perfected in the late 1800s, was also the site of the region's first movie theeters.

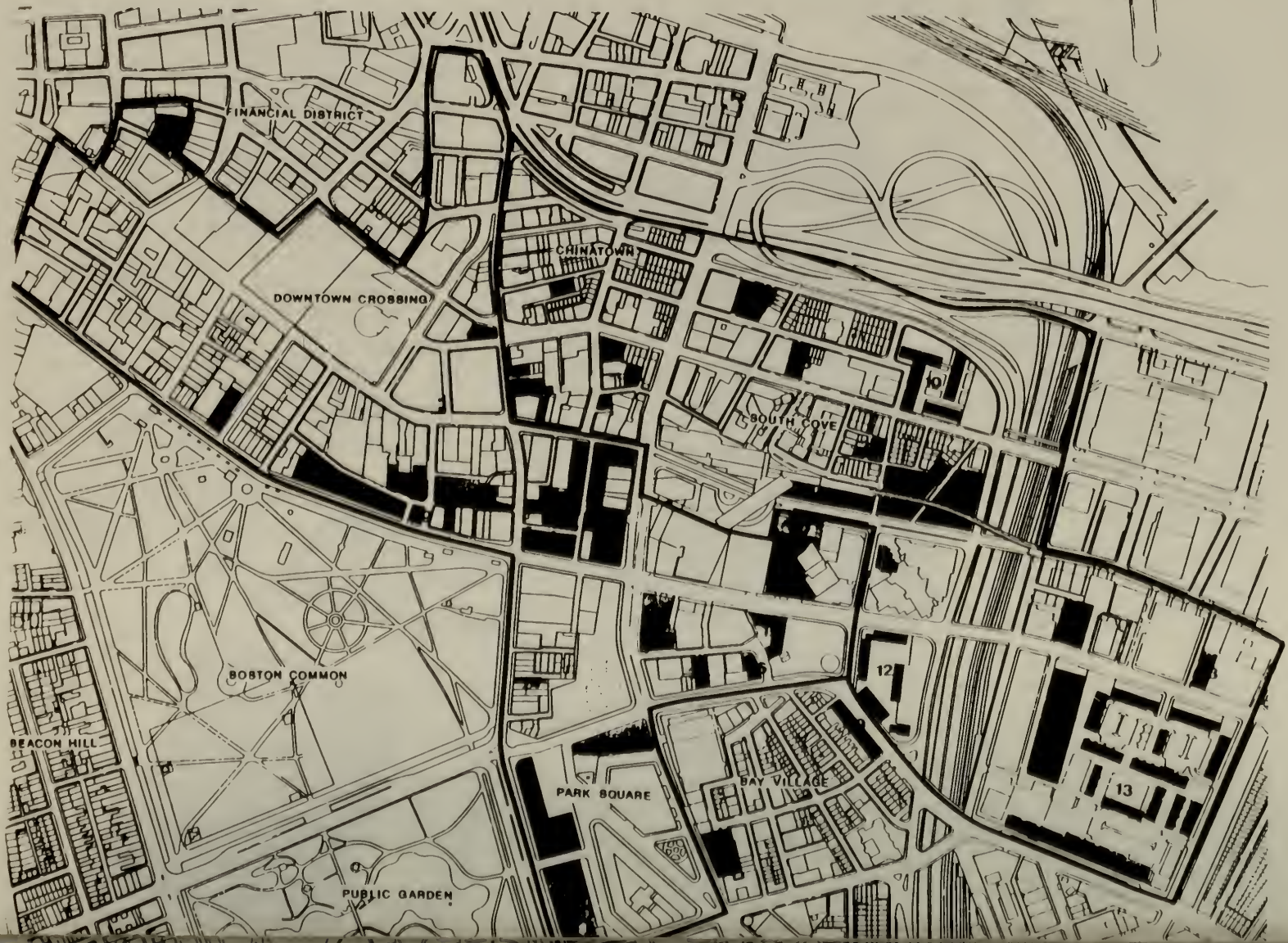
5. **West Street**
Four early twentieth century commerciel build ings, on Tremont and West Streets that are of high architectural quality end illustrete importent trends in the history ol Boston's retail shopping fecilities

6. **Newspaper Row**
Four commerciel buildings located on Washington, Milk and Hawley Street The build ings are all that remeins of the publishing district which flourished in the eree during the late nineteenth and eerly twentieth centuries

Proposed Historic District:
Ladder Blocks Historic District

Study Area for Chinatown Historic Preservation
For designation as a historic district or the desig nation of individuel buildings es lendmarks

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MIDTOWN CULTURAL PLAN
CITY OF BOSTON OFFICE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES



HOUSING

KEY

		Total Units
EXISTING - MIDTOWN		
1	The Four Seasons	100
2	Touraine Building	276
3	80 Mason Place	129
4	Tremont on the Common	374
5	The Stearns Building	140
6	Chauncy House	87
		1,106
EXISTING - CHINATOWN		
7	Hong Lock House	26
8	Chinagate Apts	15
9	Oxford Place	39
10	Tai Tung Village	214
11	Quincy Tower	162
12	Mass Pike Towers	200
13	Castle Square	500
14	South Cove Plaza	147
15	South Cove Plaza East	84
16	South Cove Manor Nursing Home	100
		1,487
UNDER CONSTRUCTION		
17	Heritage on the Garden	87
18	Parkside West	94
19	Tremont Village	20
20	31 Beach Street	32
21	Richwin Place	30
22	Lodging House	78
		341
UNDER REVIEW		
23	Park Square	110
24	146 Boylston Street	33
25	Parcel C-4	125
26	Parcel C-2	36
27	Parcel P-12 (Don Bosco)	205
28	Commonwealth Center	170
29	Parkside at Mason	38
30	Parkside East	121
31	Woolworth's	150
32	Parcel R-3/R 3A	225
33	Waterford Place	40
		1,253
PROPOSED		
34	Edison Parking Lot	63
35	Hinge Block	300
36	Parcel P-4/P 4A	80
37	Parcel P-3/P 3A	
38	Parcel P-2	60
39	Parcel R-1	80
40	Parcel P-12a	30
		613

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

LAND USE
DRAFT CONCEPT PLAN

Key

- Commercial
- Residential (Existing)
- Institutional
- Open Space
- Office/Manufacturing/Others
- Residential (Future Growth)

Expand Neighborhood Business, Cultural Facilities, and Community Services Into the Midtown Cultural District

The demand to expand the capacity and variety of services and businesses in Chinatown have been growing with the natural maturing and the increasing diversity of the Asian community. Furthermore, one third of the Chinatown patrons are non Asian. Over 45 percent of the Chinatown businesses have been in operation for less than six years. More than forty Asian businesses are already operating in the lower Washington Street area along the western edge of the Chinatown, pioneering that area's revitalization. Ethnic businesses, cultural facilities, and immigrant services will not only benefit the Asian community but also add to the vitality of the Midtown Cultural District.

Contain Institutional Encroachment

Evaluation of "highest and best" land use scenarios should be viewed from the perspective of community needs. Any future institutional development must not result in displacement but should, in fact, create community housing, employment, business opportunities, and open space.

Preserve And Upgrade Existing Cultural/Commercial Core

Chinatown is an ideal cultural business and service center to New England's Asian community because of its central location and easy access by public transportation and regional roadways. Only one fifth of the Chinatown business patrons are residents of the neighborhood. About two hundred businesses and over sixty community organizations and service agencies are based in the neighborhood. To enhance the historic role of the business core north of Kneeland Street, public images, physical appearance, and utilities need to be improved along with parking, trash collection, and public safety.

Preserve And Reinforce Existing Neighborhood Fabric

Chinatown consists of a commercial core north of Kneeland Street, [illegible] cultural center south of Kneeland and across the Turnpike. The neighborhood is characterized by modest sized lots with buildings of moderate heights that are tightly interwoven with alleyways and narrow streets. Nearly 50 percent of the buildings have four floors or less, and almost all are under 100 feet. About 77 percent of the buildings are constructed of brick. The modest and intimate neighborhood structure is broken up along major streets fronting the [illegible] including the few high use housing complexes bordering the Massachusetts Turnpike and institutional facilities along Washington Street. Future developments should amend and reinforce a physical neighborhood context that accommodates a pedestrian oriented environment and residential ambience in terms of scale, design, and use. The connection between the subdistricts should be protected to preserve the neighborhood as a unified entity.

Continue Residential Expansion South of the Turnpike

Chinatown remains a primary choice of residence because of its central location and a well established social network and support system. In addition to being the most densely populated neighborhood in the city, Chinatown's limited housing stock also has the highest rate of overcrowding at 21 percent. Affordable housing for families and the elderly remains a top priority. The southward migration over the Turnpike was instigated with the construction of the Expressway and the extension of the Turnpike in the 60s and 70s. Additional housing opportunities should be explored without encroaching upon the established neighborhood centers.

Expand Open Space, Businesses, and Jobs Resources In the Future Subarea East of the Realigned Southeast Expressway

The Chinatown neighborhood should retain access to and control of the additional land area that will be created with Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel project to accommodate the needs of the growing Asian community. Since 1970, the Asian population in the City of Boston has increased from about 8,500 to an estimated 25,000 today. The additional land resources will be critical in addressing the contending demands on the existing Chinatown neighborhood. In addition to obtaining the much needed open space and recreation resources, businesses and industries that will be located in the new subarea of Chinatown should provide a base for the economic diversification of the community.

Appendix A

Land Uses on the Hinge Block in 1952

Although the Hinge Block area was already deteriorating by the early 1950s, a look at land uses in the area in 1952 reflects the block's historic character and uses in the first half of the twentieth century. The block's Washington Street and Stuart Street buildings were part of a thriving garment district with a number buildings used almost solely for manufacturing and wholesaling clothing as well as by individual tailors. This pattern was repeated across Washington Street in buildings such as the Liberty Tree building, which housed twelve different clothing manufacturers. The names of many of the block's tailors and the presence of the Jewish Daily Forward on Stuart Street indicate that the area had a large Jewish presence. By contrast the Boylston Street edge, particularly the Union Warren Building, was home to many advertising agencies, agents, and some medical offices, uses which were all common further down Boylston Street in buildings such as the Little and Walker Buildings. Another interesting phenomenon was the presence of four different social clubs on LaGrange Street, which was also home to a number of small service shops, such as barbers, hat repair stores, picture framers, sign painters, bakeries, etc. LaGrange Street also had a few vacant buildings. Stuart Street was also home to a row of hardware stores, while Tremont Street seemed to be favored by employment agencies. The Boylston Building had a variety of retail uses.

The Hinge Block in 1952
Advertising Agencies: 14
Agents: 4
Barber Shops and Barber Supplies: 4
Bakeries: 1
Beauty Salons: 2
Clothing Retail: 6
Clothing Manufacturers and Wholesalers: 16
Commercial Artists and Sign Painters: 4
Employment Agencies 5
Hardware, Glass, Electrical Supplies 4
Hotels: 1
Jewelers: 3
Liquor Stores: 3
Medical Offices 9
Musical Instruments: 3
Newspapers, publishing houses, news services: 3
Offices, other: 6
Other: 1
Parking Lots: 2
Picture Framers and Painters: 4
Photographers: 5
Real Estate Brokers: 2
Recording Studio: 1
Retail/Service, other: 11
Restaurants and Bars: 13
Schools: 1
Shoe Stores: 1
Social/Social Service: 8
Subway Stops: 1
Tailors: 7
Theatrical Supplies: 1
Theaters: 1
Travel Agencies: 2
Vacant: 5

Advertising Agencies: 14

20 Boylston — Markson Bros.
(Boylston Building)

216 Tremont
(Union Savings Bank Building)
Reilly Brown and Willard, advertising agency
Arthur Cohen, advertising agency
Nathan Miller, advertising agency
Edmund Witten, advertising agency
RD Northrop Co.
icFH Birch Co, outdoor advertising
Irwin Spear, advertising
International Readers League, advertising and circulation
Personal Advertising Service
Harvey Weinbaum, adv
William Small agency
Tarier and Skinner, Inc., advertising
Daniel F. Sullivan, advertising

Agents: 4

62 Boylston — Ames and Day manufacturers agents, television
(Hotel Touraine)

216 Tremont
(Union Savings Bank Building)
Motion Pictures for Television and Advertising
Rubin Burke's Co, manufacturer's agents

220 Tremont — Broadway Theatrical Agency

220 Tremont — JJ Sullivan booking agency

Barber Shops and Barber Supplies: 4

62 Boylston — Hotel Touraine Barber Shop
(Hotel Touraine)

21 LaGrange — Henry Bohlin, barber supplies

34 LaGrange — Eddie and Tommy's barber shop

51a Stuart — Lorenzo Gaetono, barber

Bakeries: 1

24 LaGrange — Quinzani Brothers bakery

Beauty Salons: 2

62 Boylston — Beauty Art Salon
(Hotel Touraine)

216 Tremont — Anna Johnson, beauty salon
(Union Savings Bank Building)

Clothing: Retail: 6

2 Boylston (Boylston Building)	The Continental department store
	SM Grier, women's clothing
34 Boylston	Modern Sportswear, men's furnishings
40 Boylston	Stephen Girard Clothing
659 Boylston	Lampson's Men's Shop
226 Tremont	Better Made Cap Co.
681 Washington	Lampson's Uniforms

Clothing Manufacturers and wholesalers: 16

18 LaGrange	Charles Slesinger, woolen goods
19 Stuart (Dill Bldg)	Wigon Mfg
	B&F Sportswear
	Neil Sportswear (women's)
	Darby Togs (children)
	Pants Craft (children)
	Stuart Pants Manufacturing
	Royal Clothing (uniforms)
	Boston Hemstitching and Shirring
	Majestic Pants Co.
665 Washington (Gayety Building)	Connies' Dress Shop, mfts.
	Sandler Button Hole Co
	Novelty Embroidery Company
	Adolph Bazel, woolens
	Joseph Catagnetti, woolens
673 Washington	C & C Clothing Co., men's clothing manufacturer

Clothing: Tailors

32 Boylston	Guy Barile, tailor
32 Boylston	Windsor Tailoring Co.
7 LaGrange	Cornell Custom Tailor
665 Washington (Gayety Building)	Avalon Clothes tailors
	Louis Schwartz, tailor
	Hyman Bauman, tailor
673 Washington	Norman Tailoring Co.

Commercial Artists and Sign Painters: 4

32 Boylston	Modern Sign Co.
34 LaGrange	Foster Sign Co.
34 LaGrange	Harold Smith, commercial artist
34 LaGrange	William Jeffrey, commercial artist

Employment Services/Temporary Agencies: 5

65 Stuart	Albiani Lunch, employment office
216 Tremont (Union Savings Bank Building)	Crowell-Collier Reader Service, sub agency
220 Tremont	Sexton;s Employment Service
226 Tremont	United Employment Bureau]
230 Tremont	Park Employment Exchange

Hardware, Glass and Electrical Supplies: 3

15 LaGrange	Millen and Co., wholesale and retail glass
25 Stuart	Levy Hardware
27 Stuart	HM Saunders Co, hardware
55 Stuart	MP White, hardware

Hotels: 1

62 Boylston	Hotel Touraine

Jewelers: 3

71 Stuart	Time Jewelers
665 Washington (Gayety Building)	Cornelius Cahill, jeweler
677 Washington	Barron's Jewelry

Liquor Stores: 3

28 Stuart	Stuart Liquor
226 Tremont	H. Hollander Co.
675 Washington	Peter's Liquor Store

Medical Offices: 9

32 Boylston	John Costello, physician
62 Boylston (Hotel Touraine)	
	Alphonse J. Kizelewicz, chiropodist
	Walter Whelan, dentist
21 LaGrange	William Field, optometrist
216 Tremont (Union Savings Bank Building)	
	Maurice Krass, dentist
	Stanley Garrard, dentist
665 Washington	Berry Barnett, optometrist
673 Washington	
	Old Colony Dental Laboratories
	Hyman Adelstein, dentist

Musical Instruments: 3

32 Boylston	Phillip Robrish musical instruments
38 LaGrange	EU Wurlitzer Co.
224 Tremont	M and L Musical Instrument Co.

Newspapers, publishing houses, news services: 3

1 Stuart	Jewish Daily Forward
216 Tremont (Union Savings Bank Building)	
	Fairchild News Service
	Carmelite Press

Offices: Other: 6

22 Boylston (Boylston Building)	Widley Savings Bank
32 Boylston	Albert's Display Service
62 Boylston (Hotel Touraine)	Ida Levy, public stenographer
19 Stuart (Dill Building)	John Jenkins, show cards
216 Tremont (Union Savings Bank Building)	
	Covington Company, builders
	Wallace Brown greeting cards
	Marchant Calculating Machine Co.
665 Washington (Gayety Building)	New England Concession Co.

Other: 1

16 Boylston (Boylston Building)	used by Morgan's

Parking Lots: 2

56 LaGrange	Providence Parking
41 Stuart	Pilgrim Parking

Picture Framers and Painters: 4

16 LaGrange	Frank Kraft, picture framer
16 LaGrange	Walter Parkes, picture framer
25 LaGrange	Harvey Additon, oil paintings
30a LaGrange	North Shore, picture framers

Photographers: 5

62 Boylston (Hotel Touraine)	Bruno of Hollywood, commercial photographers
28 LaGrange	Mosgofian-Stephansky, commercial photographers
220 Tremont	Fred Molino, photographer
226 Tremont	John Wilkinson, photographer
671 Washington	VanDyke studio photographer

Real Estate: 2

216 Tremont (Union Savings Bank Building)	Baker and Young
220 Tremont	Home Rental Agency

Recording Studios: 1

216 Tremont (Union Savings Bank Building)	Tel-a-Aix Recording Studio

Retail/Service: Other: 11

30a Boylston	Kryiakoullis Kyyriakos, boot black
42 Boylston	Ace Vacuum Stores
60 Boylston	Krey's Inc., cameras and supplies
62 Boylston (Hotel Touraine)	
	Estabrook and Eaton cigars
	Ames Gift Shop
	Ames Ticket Agency
12 LaGrange	Harry's Shoe Repair
20 LaGrange	Hand in the Hatter, hat cleaning and repair
28 LaGrange	Charles Pasek, locksmith
53 Stuart	Esther Robinson, pawnbroker
232 Tremont	Macy Drug Co.
	Tyson Ticket Agency

Restaurants/Bars: 13

8 Boylston (Boylston Building)	Topsy's Chicken Coop Restaurant
38 Boylston	Leonardi Inc. restaurant
11 LaGrange	Edward's Restaurant
13 Stuart	Pieroni restaurant
31 Stuart	Jacob Worths
51 Stuart	Athens Olympia Restaurant
63 Stuart	The Stuart Manor
222 Tremont	Tamworth Cafe (The Tam)
228 Tremont	Wimpy's Grills Inc
230 Tremont	Embassy Restaurant
663 Washington	New York Sandwich Shop
669 Washington	Wimpy's Grill restaurant
679 Washington	John's Downeyflake Doughnut Shop

Schools: 1

38 LaGrange	Wurlitzer School of Music

Shoe Stores: 1

30 Boylston	Shoe Eez Comfort Shoes

Social/Social Service: 8

48 Boylston (YMCU Building)	Boston YMCU
	The Country Week
	Camera Club
	Citizen Training Department of the Boston Juvenile Court
16 LaGrange	VFW No 3403
17 LaGrange	Boston Community Forum and Social Club
21a LaGrange	LaGrange Street House
22 LaGrange	The Almous Club

Subway Station: 1

14 LaGrange	Boylston St. subway station

Theatrical Supplies: 1

216 Tremont (Union Savings Bank Building)	The Make Up Box, wigs and make up

Theaters: 1

661 Boylston	Publix Theater

Travel Agency: 2

62 Boylston (Hotel Touraine)	Michael Ames Travel Agency
673 Washington	Norman Travel Bureau

Vacant: 5

13.5 LaGrange
19 LaGrange
26 LaGrange
32 LaGrange
47 LaGrange

Appendix B

Adult Entertainment Uses on the Hinge Block: 1970-1988

Address	Establishment	Dates
651 Washington	Pic-ca-dilly Lounge	pre-1970-1979
659 Washington	The Book Mart	pre-1970-1987
663 Washington	663 Lounge	early 1970s-1979
669 Washington	Mini-Theater	1974?-1978?
671-673 Washington	Cinema Twin-X	1974-1978
	776 Club	1977-1978
	Eros Cinema	1981
	X-Cinema/Videorama	1983-1988
681 Washington	Slick Chic Restaurant	1974
(Hayden Building)	The Scene	1977-1981
685 Washington	Intermission Lounge	pre-1981-1988
693-703 Washington	Werth Amusement Center	1970
	Novelty Books/Capri Theatre	1974
	Peeparama/Capital Theater Arcade	peeps: 1977-1978 books: 1977-present
4-6 Boyslton	Liberty Book	1977-1981
8 Boylston	Pic-ca-dilly Lounge	pre 1970-1979
10-14 Boylston	Novelty Book/Boylston Book	1970-1981
22 Boylston		1975-1981
4 LaGrange	Club LaGrange	?
7 LaGrange	Twin-X Cinema, side entrance	1974-1981
15 LaGrange	The Club/The Glass Slipper	1981-present
16 LaGrange		1981-1988
25 LaGrange	Good Time Charlies	1971-1981
24-28 LaGrange	Edward's	pre-1970-1976
204 Tremont	The Art Cinema	1971-present
230 Tremont	Caribe Lounge	pre-1970-present
232 Tremont	Gee Gee's	pre-1970-1978

ACCOPRESS®

25070	YELLOW
25071	BLACK
25072	LIGHT BLUE
25073	DARK BLUE
25074	LIGHT GRAY
25075	LIGHT GREEN
25076	DARK GREEN
25077	TANGERINE
25078	RED
25079	EXECUTIVE RED

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